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Meadowlark

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Letter from the editor

This winter will mark the fourth annual trek I have made with friends from Decatur to view wintering Bald Eagles in Illinois. Each time we see the spectacular white-headed bird of prey we realize that the Bald Eagle is more than just a symbol representing the United States.

The Bald Eagle is also a symbol of what can go wrong if we are not careful. It is a reminder that introducing man-made chemicals to our environment can have detrimental effects to many species including homo sapiens.

The Bald Eagle is also a symbol of what can go right; a reminder that we can work together to protect our endangered flora and fauna. Indeed, the Bald Eagle is making a comeback in Illinois and throughout the country.

The eagle is also a symbol of the intrinsic beauty of birds. The wonder of watching a creature lifting and lowering its wings to pull itself through the air is never more fully experienced than when observing an eagle take flight on a snowy, winter day.

This issue, the second devoted to Illinois' endangered species, focuses on the Bald Eagle. You will find articles about the status of the Bald Eagle in winter, where to best find eagles in winter, and how to separate the various plumage stages once you locate the birds.

Whatever you feel when you observe an eagle in flight, may you also experience the burning need to protect Illinois' endangered species.

Sheryl DeVore

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About Our Cover Illustrator

David Athans drew the Curve-billed Thrasher, a western bird that was seen in southern Illinois the winter of 1992/93 marking a first state record. Athans, a member of the Chicago Ornithological Society, has exhibited his drawings at the Midwest Birding Symposium and also sells his works through Wild Birds Unlimited. He accepts commissioned work and can be contacted at 708-388-0285.

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President's Message

The majestic Bald Eagle has a winter niche right here in our own state making it easy for Illinois birders to observe this rare raptor. Yet some area birders are still unaware of the eagle's winter presence in the prairie state. The same holds true when it comes to the Illinois Ornithological Society. While most charter members have renewed and new members have joined, we still regularly find area birders who are unaware of our presence in Illinois.

We could use your help spreading the word about IOS. Perhaps you can leave some brochures at a local nature center or library. Perhaps you can distribute them during a Christmas or spring bird count.

Let's make our New Year's goal to inform others about IOS. You might make some new friends in the process and broaden your birding horizons as well. From all of us at IOS, best wishes for great birding in 1994.

Eric Walters

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The Bald Eagle in Illinois

How research and winter population counts are helping this endangered species

by Sheryl De Vore

Icy rain pelted slick roads in Rock Island as we drove toward Credit Island along the Mississippi River 9 a.m. on 2 January 1993 searching for wintering Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). The weather forecast was dismal - sleet and freezing rain all day making for hazardous conditions. We wondered how active the eagles might be in such weather.

Driving slowly, windshield wipers going, we noticed the river on our right and an island of red oaks, cottonwoods, and grass on our left. Then we saw it, there on the grass, dark body sandwiched between white head and white tail, an adult Bald Eagle feeding on a skunk carcass. We stopped the car. The eagle raised its head, then flew across our path and landed in an oak, its eyes gazing over the river. Almost magically, the sleet turned to snow. The eagle perched quietly, white snow melding into white feathers.

We saw 40 eagles in two days in the Rock Island area that New Year's weekend 1993. But most memorable was the striking image of the eagle in the snow, a testimony to the fact that through the efforts of state organizations and researchers, this state and federally-endangered bird continues to winter in Illinois; its numbers possibly even increasing.

Between 1,300 and 1,400 Bald Eagles winter in Illinois annually, more than in any state other than Alaska (Illinois Audubon, winter 1989-90). At an important eagle wintering site, Lock and Dam 14 near the Elton E. Fawks Bald Eagle Refuge (formerly the Oak Valley Eagle Refuge), up to 120 eagles spend winter nights on the 173 acres of forested ravines (Friederici, 1992). Far to the south, on a January morning in 1993, more than 150 eagles were seen feeding along the Mississippi River backwaters near Lock and Dam 26 near the towns of Alton, Winfield, and Clarksville (Fargo, 1993). Cedar Glen Eagle Roost and wintering area at Lock and Dam No. 19 is today one of the largest eagle wintering sites in the country (The Conservator, Winter 1990,91).

Part of the eagle's success in Illinois has to do with the elimination of the pesticide DDT in 1972 as well as work being done by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board (IESPB), the Illinois Nature Conservancy, and Western Illinois University. Professionals associated with these organizations have worked to provide essential wintering and nesting habitat for the eagles. They continue to conduct winter population and nesting counts and to research the biology and habits of these majestic raptors.

Bald Eagles arrive in Illinois beginning sometime in late September or early October. They remain through March or early April, with peak numbers in January and February. Adults are characterized by their white head, yellow beak and eyes, white tail, and dark body; immatures range from mostly dark to dark with splotches of white as they grow to adulthood (See Field Identification article in this issue).

In 1889, the Bald Eagle was a common bird along larger water courses in Illinois and could be found at any time of the year (Bohlen, 1989). Eagles nested in Illinois in such areas as Lake, Marshall, Alexander, Gallatin, and Hamilton Counties. Some of the eagles which nested along lakes and rivers in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan migrated in winter to open water areas along the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers in Illinois.

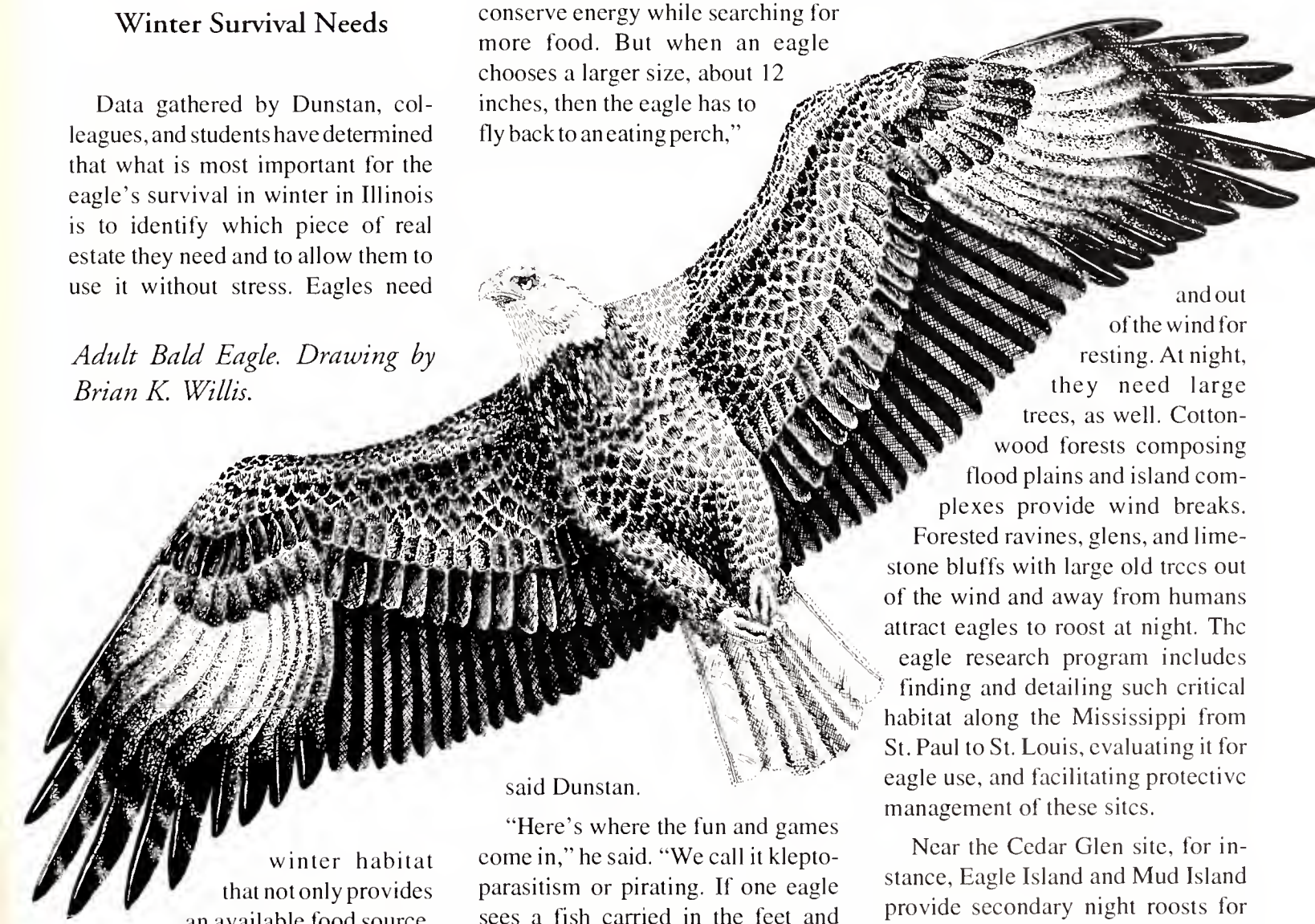
But in the middle 1900s, scientists and bird watchers became concerned about the Bald Eagle. "One Illinois resident, Elton Fawks, a naturalist and conservationist from the Quad Cities, became alarmed in the early 1960s about the declining number of eagles along the Mississippi River," said Sue Lauzon, executive director of the IESPB. Fawks, who was proclaimed Eagle Man of Illinois by Gov. James Thompson "was one of those who sounded the national alarm and speculated that the eagle's decline had to do with pesticides," said Lauzon.

Fawks, along with Dr. Thomas C. Dunstan, biology professor at Western Illinois University, Macomb, and others identified and researched the eagle wintering area near Lock and Dam 19 in west-central Illinois and found it to be a vital component in the preservation of the Bald Eagle in Illinois (Illinois Audubon, Winter 1989-90). In 1970, Cedar Glen Eagle Roost, an 182-acre night roost was purchased by the Illinois Chapter of the Nature Conservancy and became the nation's first protected and managed area specifically for Bald Eagles, said Dunstan.

Since then, the conservancy has also purchased several island and mainland areas used for feeding, eating, loafing, and some night time roosting, now totaling about 580 acres. Dunstan has been researching eagle wintering habits and habitats along the Mississippi River from St. Paul, Minnesota to St. Louis since 1970. Additional efforts by the Iowa and Illinois chapters of the nature conservancy, the NWF, and state and federal management agencies have protected similar habitats for eagles at Locks and Dams No. 10, 14, 19, 24, and 25 (Dunstan, 1989).

Winter Survival Needs

Data gathered by Dunstan, colleagues, and students have determined that what is most important for the eagle's survival in winter in Illinois is to identify which piece of real estate they need and to allow them to use it without stress. Eagles need winter habitat that not only provides an available food source, but also older and larger trees that provide perching, loafing, and night time roosting sites.



Adult Bald Eagle. Drawing by Brian K. Willis.

Cedar Glen meets all those requirements. For one thing, the lock and dam built in 1913 has a great deal of open water available even in the coldest winters. There, eagles mainly dine on gizzard shad, an herbivorous fish which is susceptible to water temperature changes and thus dies in large numbers. "It's like a food conveyor belt rolling 24 hours a day heading downstream and visited by hungry eagles from dawn to dusk," said Dunstan.

He and his students have studied how eagles decide which size gizzard shad to take. "If an eagle selects a smaller size of about 4 inches, it immediately eats it on the fly," said Dunstan. "That allows the eagle to conserve energy while searching for more food. But when an eagle chooses a larger size, about 12 inches, then the eagle has to fly back to an eating perch," said Dunstan.

"Here's where the fun and games come in," he said. "We call it kleptoparasitism or pirating. If one eagle sees a fish carried in the feet and tucked under another eagle's tail, it then follows the flying fish and eagle and tries to get some for itself. That is when perch habitat composed of silver maples is important." Silver maples have relatively close-grown branches. When an eagle lands on a silver maple to eat a fish, its fellows can't pirate as easily.

Even more important to wintering eagles, however, are 60- to 70-year-old cottonwood trees with horizontal branches spaced far apart that provide perching structure for times other than eating. "During these times, five or six eagles can share limited habitat together and watch for fish to feed upon," said Dunstan.

In addition to foraging and perching areas, eagles also need a habitat with big trees in an area exposed to sunshine and out of the wind for resting. At night, they need large trees, as well. Cottonwood forests composing flood plains and island complexes provide wind breaks. Forested ravines, glens, and limestone bluffs with large old trees out of the wind and away from humans attract eagles to roost at night. The eagle research program includes finding and detailing such critical habitat along the Mississippi from St. Paul to St. Louis, evaluating it for eagle use, and facilitating protective management of these sites.

Near the Cedar Glen site, for instance, Eagle Island and Mud Island provide secondary night roosts for the eagles. "For the past 23 years, we have been purchasing buffer zones in the area piecemeal and the effort continues today," said Dunstan.

The Illinois Department of Conservation in 1976 got involved sponsoring a "Dimes for Eagles" program in which school children donated dimes for the Prairie State Eagle Refuge Project. The money helped pay to protect shoreline foraging and feeding areas for eagles. In 1978, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Illinois Department of Conservation, USFWS, Illinois and Iowa Departments of Transportation, and WIU professors worked together to find a way to replace a dilapidated interstate bridge across the Mississippi while having minimum impact on the eagles.

Other Illinois wintering eagle habitats have also been protected. Oak Valley was purchased in the wake of the threat of timber harvest of large cottonwoods to make way for a motel. Elton Fawks and a small army of concerned citizens along with the Nature Conservancy and the NWF got involved and saved the area.

Winter Counts

In the late 1970s the IESPB began conducting wintering eagle counts incidental to official waterfowl counts. "The most accurate and specific counts began in 1988 when the board hired a pilot to fly two spotters over the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers to count eagles once annually," said Lauzon of the endangered species protection board. The aerial count is done annually between 1 January and 15 January in conjunction with a nationwide program sponsored by the NWF.

"We fly from 6:30 a.m. until the light is fading," said Lauzon. "It can take two to two and a half days to complete the aerial count." They fly from the Wisconsin border along the Mississippi River to Cairo in extreme southern Illinois. They also fly over the Illinois River beginning upstream from Starved Rock State Park and ending at the confluence of the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers at Pere Marquette State Park, another excellent place to watch eagles in winter (Bohlen, 1989).

"Being up in the air and searching for eagles is exhilarating," said Lauzon. "You're flying along, there's one bird here and one bird there, then nothing for a while, and then suddenly you see a large group of 15 or 20. No matter how many we spot in one location, every eagle I see I think that is wonderful."

Amid the sense of wonder is a sense of danger. The counters fly low between 300 and 500 feet. The air is more turbulent the closer they get to the ground, but they have to stay low over the river to see the birds perched on the trees. They also meander through the backwaters and sloughs, areas that can not be covered by foot.

"It is a little scary," said Lauzon. "There are a lot of power lines in the way. The pilot has to be alert. We have had some times when we came closer to power lines than I would have liked. Sometimes we have to play leap frog. We fly low, see a power line, go up and then back down, see a bridge, and we're back up again. It's like riding a roller coaster."

The spotters have learned that eagles prefer sitting on trees at the tip of an island. "Perhaps the current is faster there and makes for good fishing."

Although IESPB has not done the survey long enough to show any real trends, "there is no question that numbers of wintering eagles in Illinois are steadily increasing," said Lauzon (Table 1). Other surveys show similar results. Surveys done by the Illinois Natural History Survey showed a count of 63 eagles in January in 1960 to 1,217 in 1986 (Havera and Kruse). Numbers of wintering eagles have also steadily been rising for the nation (Table 2). In 1979, the national winter count was 9,815 eagles and in 1992, the count was 16,340. Some of this trend may be attributed to more and better surveys, but some also to population increases.

Although migration patterns of immatures are erratic, an upward trend in the numbers of immatures wintering in Illinois is also evident according to data. Still, Dunstan cautions that the numbers indicate that a third of the population is immatures. "A healthy population has more young than old," he said. A 50/50 ratio would be more promising," he said.

Dr. Thomas C. Dunstan does research on the Bald Eagle at Western Illinois University in Macomb.

Table 1.

Total Number of Eagles Seen in Aerial Count *

Year	Adults	Immature	Unknown	Total
1988	659	342	15	1016
1989	843	399	14	1256
1990	1014	440	85	1539
1991	1226	635	3	1864
1992	1441	573	11	2025

* Between Jan. 1 and Jan. 15 1988-1992, entire length of Mississippi River; Illinois River from Starved Rock to Pere Marquette State Park. Survey done by Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board.

Dunstan also cautions that "winter counts of eagles do not really show breeding productivity, but rather indicate how important it is to protect winter habitat." Lauzon agreed, "These aerial counts do not really gauge how well the eagles are doing. What we really must consider is their nesting success."

Nesting Success

So far, signs in Illinois are promising. In 1973, Lauzon knew of one nest at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge in southern Illinois. It was not successful until 1978. Then in 1983, a nest was discovered at the Savanna Army Depot in northwestern Illinois near Mississippi Palisades State Park. In 1986, another nest was discovered on private property in west-central Illinois and in 1987, there were two nests at Crab Orchard. From 1987 to 1992, there have been more nests every year, said Lauzon (Table 3).

In 1987, the IESPB counted four known nests which were also active with one successful nesting and two young fledged. In 1992, 11 of 17 known nests were active. Eight of those nests were successful with 16 young fledged. Although the number dipped slightly in 1989 due to strong winds that blew down two nests, the number of nesting eagles in Illinois seems to be on an upward trend, said Lauzon.

The 1985 estimate of the breeding population of Bald Eagles in the United States was approximately 5,000 pairs; the number of breeding pairs in the lower 48 states increased about 6 percent between 1982 and 1985 (Havera and Kruse, 1988).

In general, the data look good for the Bald Eagle, but "it must be treated with caution," said Lauzon. And although the federal government has recently considered changing the eagle's status from endangered to threatened, that does not mean scientists should stop counting eagles in winter or summer, said Lauzon. Before deciding whether to re-classify the species to threatened, the federal government is revising its goals which dealt only with numbers. New goals will include habitat provision and pesticide reduction.

In the last four to five years, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin exceeded their numeric goals for nesting, said Lauzon. But that may not tell the whole story. In pockets of nesting sites close to the Lake Superior shore, the productivity of eagles has declined. Several studies in the Great Lakes region have reported that eagles nesting along the shoreline have lower reproductive success than those nesting further inland (Miller and Pfanmuller, 1991). Contaminant levels from addled eggs collected close to the shoreline are also higher than levels in eggs collected inland (Miller and Pfanmuller 1991). Data show high levels of DDE and PCBs from eagles nesting within 5 miles of the Great Lakes, compared to inland sites (Michigan Department of Natural Resources report 1992, unpublished).

Table 2.

Midwinter Bald Eagle Surveys - National Count*

Year	Adult	Immature	Unknown	Total
1988	7391	4091	354	11,836
1989	7254	4089	267	11,610
1990	8152	4425	997	13,574
1991	5885	3041	202	9128
1992	9758	4955	1286	16340

* As eagle numbers continue to increase, some states have dropped out of the counts in some years. In 1991/92, the state of Washington, which hosts a high number of wintering eagles, did not participate in the count.

"It's a classic case that tells us we better keep monitoring these birds," said Lauzon. At Western Illinois University, Dunstan and students continue to study the biology and habits of Bald Eagles, keeping close watch at protected sites. "We need to watch the quality of river waters," said Dunstan. "Dying fish attract eagles, but dying fish could also mean chemicals and pollutants.

Protecting the large old trees of the riverine forest is also paramount. In spring, barges begin their rush upstream and are tied up to the shore line to the biggest trees. That destroys protective bark, uproots the trees, weakens the root structure, and causes erosion. "We need to continue to manage perch habitat at these sites and think not just one or two years in the future, but manage the areas for the next 100 or more years," said Dunstan.

Meanwhile, the Bald Eagle Appreciation Days just over the Iowa border in Keokuk attracts thousands of visitors who observe Bald Eagles and learn about their habits. "Educating the public is important," said Dunstan. "From the development of an appreciation comes the development of an ethic," he said. "And it is the ethic that will stand the test of time."

Hal Cohen, ornithologist and professor at the College of DuPage and other area birders such as Alan Anderson, president of the Chicago Audubon Society, lead eagle trips in winter to promote awareness and teach students about the natural history of Bald Eagles.

I met Hal Cohen several winters ago in early March at Mississippi Palisades State Park. Cohen announced he had seen 100 or more eagles migrating along the river that day. Above our heads, we heard the remarkably high-pitched call of an eagle as it circled around another eagle in pre-courtship flight.

Table 3.

Number of Bald Eagle Nests in Illinois 1985-1993

Year	Known	Active	Successful	Number Fledged
1985	2	2	1	1
1986	3	3	2	2
1987	4	4	1 (+1)	2 (+1)*
1988	10	8	4	8
1989	12	10	4 (+2)*	4 (+5)*
1990	14	8	5	7
1991	15	9	6	12
1992	17	11	8	16
1993**	20	10	6-7	12-14

* In 1987 and 1989, nests that were active were blown down during storms, killing nestlings in the nest. The numbers in brackets indicate additional nests and nestlings that were fairly far along, close to fledging their young. We lost some of our likely eagle production in those years (over half our eaglets in 1989) due to natural events.

**Estimated numbers as of this writing

Data Compiler: Sue Lauzon, executive director, Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board

We experienced a tentative exhilaration as an eagle plunged to the icy water to snatch a fish with its powerful talons. We hope that with the work of protection board, the National Wildlife Federation, the Nature Conservancy, Dr. Dunstan, and other concerned organizations and citizens, we will be rewarded on many future trips with the pristine sight of an eagle flying over the Mississippi and our prairie state.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Sue Lauzon, executive director of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board and Dr. Thomas C. Dunstan, professor of biology at Western Illinois University for providing me with information and data regarding Bald Eagles in Illinois and for reviewing drafts of this article.

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Curve-billed Thrasher:
First Illinois Record

by Todd Fink and Judy K. DeNeal

You know you are in trouble when the question on the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee documentation form asks "Previous experience with this and similar species" and your reply is "None." Such was the situation in which we found ourselves on 16 December 1992. We were being good little soldiers and scouting within the count circle for the Rend Lake, IL Christmas Bird Count which was to occur later that week. It already had been an extraordinary day by any standard, since we had confirmed Common Loon, Horned Grebe, Ross' and White-fronted Goose, Wood Duck, Killdeer, Tree Swallow, and Marsh Wren. But the *creme de la creme* came late in the day.

We had just reached the part of the circle we would cover on count day when a flock of blackbirds lured us down a dead-end road (we can't resist a flock of blackbirds). The weedy roadsides had a few sassafras saplings covered with vines of trumpet creeper and honeysuckle and beyond that were mostly agricultural fields. I had been down this road many times and knew that although it wasn't the most active birding area it was a likely spot for White-crowned Sparrows. Not more than a few minutes before this fated sidetrack, I had mentioned to Judy that a thrasher would be a good bird (meaning unlikely) to find on count day. After the blackbirds moved on, we crept down the road waiting for the white-crowns to pop up ahead of us. Spishing indeed produced these sparrows.

Then I saw another bird that caught my eye. "There's a thrasher," I said relying on the general characteristics of the bird as it fit that *Toxostoma* template in my brain. But after viewing the bird with my field glasses, I realized this was no ordinary thrasher. "It's got an orange eye!" I said to Judy. "And it's gray! It's a DIFFERENT thrasher!"

'This was no ordinary thrasher.'

When the bird ducked into cover, I grabbed the camera and window mount and scooted into the driver's seat. Judy, taking care not to disturb the bird by slamming the car doors or by making sudden movements, took over the passenger seat as I put the car into gear. Calling out field marks, we realized the species was one of the southwestern thrashers, but neither of us had seen any of them except Long-billed in the hand or the bush. A quick glance at the National Geographic guide eliminated all but

Curve-billed Thrasher, Rend Lake, Jefferson Co. 25 December 1992. Photo by Todd Fink.

Bendire's and Curve-billed and after more study of this most cooperative bird—it preened, it sang, it turned about (but never stepped boldly into uncluttered view)—we confidently declared it a Curve-billed Thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre*). We believed then we were looking at the first state record of this species.

Description

The bird was about the size and shape of a Brown Thrasher, although the tail seemed proportionately shorter. The bill was gray to black, long, decurved, and about two-thirds the length of the head. There was no lighter pigment at the base of the lower mandible. The line formed by the bottom of the lower mandible was slightly decurved. The upperparts were gray-brown. The throat was white to pale gray bordered by a thin dark malar streak. The eye was yellow-orange. The gray-brown wing had two wing bars, with the more prominent one consisting of at least six buff-tipped middle coverts.

The secondaries had a trace of light buff edging. The central rectrices were longer than the outers. Ventrally, the outer rectrix showed perhaps a half inch to an inch of silvery-white which faded into the gray brown color of the proximal portion of the rectrix. The outer webs of the outer rectrices were dark. A very thin buff tip to the rectrices could be seen dorsally. Feet and tarsi were gray to black. Upper breast spots were more numerous than those on the lower breast and the belly spots were sparse. Overall, the breast was pale-buff becoming buffier (almost orange-buff) on the sides, flanks, and vent. Under tail coverts were orange-buff with lighter tips.

After viewing it for about an hour we lost sight of the bird as it flew low and down the fencerow. We left feeling confident our identification was correct and eager to get the word out to other birders. The next morning we met David Bohlen, Ted Teeter, and Tom and Penny Pucilek and found our thrasher at nearly the same spot we had left it the afternoon before.

Curve-billed vs. Bendire's

Our confidence was later eroded some upon reviewing articles and published photographs of Bendire's and Curve-billed Thrashers. For instance, we read that "Curve-billed and Bendire's Thrashers are indeed very similar," in an article written by John Farrand, Jr. for American Birds, 44:3 (Fall 1990). "Even today, experienced birders are sometimes hard put to decide which species they are seeing," he wrote. "Bendire's Thrasher is usually outnumbered by the Curve-billed and is often shy. It has always been the most difficult of the thrashers. The next time you are studying a bird you think might be a Bendire's Thrasher, binoculars in one hand and Kenn Kaufman's new field guide in the other, take comfort from the fact that this bird has been a problem for almost 120 years."

Curve-billed Thrasher, Rend Lake, Jefferson Co. 6 January 1993. Photo by Dennis Oehmke.

We took comfort, but still, wondered: Had we seen enough to confirm our identification? We began a more detailed analysis.

The bill was long, but shorter than some photos of Curve-bills. Perhaps it was a hatch-year bird. Was the bill curved enough to rule out Bendire's?

A paler region at the base of the lower mandible seemed to be a scuffed area, not the lighter pigmented area that may distinguish Bendire's. Overall, though, the bill pointed toward Curve-billed Thrasher.

Eye color, we learned, is not a good field mark. In fact, the best field mark is the breast pattern. The overall pattern was one of large, roundish spots. Fortunately, this bird was in fresh basic plumage. Although the bird did have some small arrowhead shaped spots (characteristic of Bendire's) at the center of the upper breast, the spots here were so numerous that individual spots got lost. We saw similar shaped spots at the center of the lower breast and upper belly and these were smaller than many anteriorly. According to Kaufman (American Birds, 1990) this is a pattern never seen on Bendire's.

Aging and Subspeciation

After being confident with our speciation of the bird, we wondered whether the bird could be aged and subspeciated. Unfortunately, I had reviewed Pyle's (1987) Identifica-

tion Guide to North American Passerines only after the bird had disappeared. No one else I questioned had scrutinized the tail pattern well enough to be able to age it, either, so I would have to depend on photos. Jim Landing, Gary Bowman, and Dennis Oehmke were kind enough to share their photos with me. I also photographed the bird. A review of all pictures turned up three slides which showed the undersurface of the outer rectrices. The problem came with trying to interpret the slides and Pyle's contradicting texts and illustrations. We decided a trip to Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History might help.

We studied 14 specimens of *Toxostoma curvirostre curvirostre*. Although none of the specimens was aged, 2 of the 14 were definitely in juvenile plumage and showed pale brownish tips to the rectrices (consistent with Pyle who says prebasic molt may include some or all of the rectrices and that hatch-year and second-year birds may have pale buffy gray tips). All adults showed white tips contrasting sharply with the gray of the remainder of the feather.

Unfortunately, photos of this thrasher were difficult to interpret due to lighting. It appeared that there was a contrast between the lighter distal and the more proximal portions of the outer rectrices suggesting adult, but the short bill and yellow-orange eyes suggested this bird was immature. We were not able to make a definitive decision.

We next considered subspeciation. Certainly the subspecies nearest in range to Illinois should be *curvirostre*, found in the eastern and southeastern portion of the species' range. A comparison of 23 *T. c. palmeri* and 14 *T. c. curvirostre* specimens at the Field Museum with available photos suggested the Illinois bird most closely resembled *T. c. curvirostre* based primarily on the ground color of the breast and belly. This bird showed a much lighter ground color to the breast, not the warm, nearly orange ground color of *T. c. palmeri*. One must keep in mind, however, as unlikely as it might be, that there are other subspecies in Mexico that look a lot like *T.c. curvirostre*.

The thrasher delighted at least 40 observers and I was fortunate enough to drive up to it at least seven times. It was partial to a fencerow with saplings (wild black cherry, sassafras, and oak) and shrubs (coralberry, blackberry, honeysuckle, multiflora rose) and particularly a sassafras sapling which was densely covered with trumpet creeper, where it would perch for long periods of time (up to 20 minutes). The bird was seen eating whole kernels of corn and was also observed digging into the litter in the fencerow with its bill, as well as scratching for food on the surface. Many times mud was observed on the bird's bill. Our Arizona visitor was last seen on 24 January 1993.

We wish to thank the many birders who came to see and photograph the thrasher. Special thanks go to Steve Bailey for researching and hand-copying records of other sightings, and to the Field Museum of Natural History, especially Tom Schulenberg, for allowing us to view specimens.

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Todd Fink is heritage biologist with the Illinois Department of Conservation's Natural Heritage Division. Judy K. DeNeal is associate editor of Meadowlark.

Other Records of Curve-billed Thrasher

Minnesota has two records of Curve-billed Thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre*): a sight record 9 September 1976 at Blue Mounds State Park, Rock County (The Loon 48: 179-80) and photo-documentation of a bird discovered 4 May 1991 that was seen through 9 May 1991 at a municipal park in Eden Prairie (American Birds, Fall 1991, Vol. 45, No. 3, p. 449).

Wisconsin has two records. The first came to a feeder "in early October 1971" in Buffalo City and stayed four years. See Wisconsin Birdlife, Samuel D. Robbins, Jr., University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1991, for the interesting story. The second record occurred during the winter of 1986-87 at a feeder near Spencer, Clark County, where the bird was first seen 24 November 1986, photographed in December, and last seen 10 February 1987.

Iowa has had three records: 25 June 1975 at Spirit Lake (bird not photographed), 17 November 1980 at a feeder west of Solon, Johnson County, and one photographed at Rathbun Reservoir 28 January 1981. See Iowa Birds by James J. Dinsmore, Thomas Kent, Darwin Koenig, Peter Petersen, Dean M. Roosa, Iowa State University Press, Ames, 1984.

Florida has had two state records, the most recent 29 May, 1989, American Birds, Vol. 44, No. 3.

—Todd Fink and Judy K. DeNeal

Observing Bald Eagles in Winter

by Reid Magney and Terri Melrose

Opportunities for spectacular viewing of Bald Eagles in Illinois exist during winter months. At the right time and right place, the observer can view dozens of eagles roosting in trees overlooking the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. What follows is a sampling of excellent areas for watching Bald Eagles in winter and best times for viewing. Also included are locations that require permission to enter and telephone numbers. Several areas bordering Illinois are also mentioned.

When planning a day or weekend of eagle watching, keep in mind that eagles are most active between 10 and 11 a.m. when air movement is coupled with some sun, said Hal Cohen, professor at College of DuPage who has observed wintering Bald Eagles for 20 years. In fall any northerly wind will bring in eagles, he said. Unless otherwise noted, the best time to see eagles is in January and February when most of the river is frozen and the eagles gather near open patches of water to feed.

'The fish upon which eagles feed often get stunned near the dam areas making food easily accessible.'

Lock and dam areas provide good viewing spots. The fish eagles eat often get stunned near the dam areas making food easily accessible.

CASSVILLE, WISCONSIN

Where to go: Nelson Dewey State Park just north of Cassville as well as two power plants, one in town and one just north of town. You may also find eagles feeding in nearby fields.

When to go: Starting around the third week of September and early October until Thanksgiving.

DUBUQUE, IOWA

Where to go: Lock and Dam No. 11, Eagle Point Park, Julien Dubuque Monument, city flood wall, the Mines of Spain, Massey Station, and the sewage treatment plant.

Highlights: Dubuque Bald Eagle Days is the second Saturday in January. For more information call 319-557-9200.

BELLEVUE, IOWA

Where to go: Bellevue State Park, north and south sections. Just south of Bellevue, the north section provides a good overlook of Lock and Dam No. 12. The number of eagles at the dam decreases when boats and fishermen are present.

Highlights: Bellevue sponsors an annual eagle festival in January depending on weather conditions. Call the Chamber of Commerce at 319-872-4991 for more information.

SAVANNA, ILLINOIS AREA

Where to go: Mississippi Palisades State Park and the Savanna Army Depot 14 miles north of Savanna off Illinois Highway 84. Access is limited to groups with advanced permission. Call 815-273-8311.

Fulton Dam, 15 miles south of Savanna, is a good place to view eagles when plenty of ice cover exists, said Cohen. Also try the parking lot of Nancy's Bar along the river in Fulton a few miles south of the dam.

Highlights: Terry Ingram, who has been counting eagles for 30 years, said he has seen 85 eagles at one time on the east side of the river near Fulton Dam, which is much better for viewing than the west side. Cohen once saw 106 eagles in four trees near Fulton Dam.

CORDOVA, ILLINOIS

Where to go: Nuclear plant provides good access to riverfront. Use road near FS plant and 3M plant, but get permission from nuclear plant guards before entering.

QUAD CITIES AREA

Where to go: Lock and Dam No. 14, approximately 2 miles south of Interstate 80 on Illinois Highway 84; Lock and Dam No. 15 and the power plant at the Rock Island Arsenal; also Sunset Park Marina on the far west end of 18th Avenue in Rock Island.

The Great River Road scenic lookout tower provides a nice look at Credit Island Park across the river on the Iowa side where eagles often roost. To get to Credit Island, take U.S. Highway 61 (West River Drive) south from Davenport. Our group saw an eagle feasting on a skunk carcass here (see Eagles in Winter article in this issue).

Highlights: The Quad Citics is such a great area to watch eagles because of the Elton E. Fawks Bald Eagle Refuge, home of about 10 percent of the state's total wintering Bald Eagle population. Located between the Mississippi River and Illinois Highway 84 near Lock and Dam 14 and Illiniwek Forest Preserve, the refuge is off limits to humans between October 1 and April 1.

The Quad Cities Bald Eagle Days will be the last weekend of January or the first weekend of February. Call 1-800-747-7800 for more information.

NEW BOSTON, ILLINOIS

Where to go: One-half mile south of Lock and Dam No. 17.

Highlights: Ingram has seen up to 150 birds here.

BURLINGTON, IOWA

Where to go: Burlington Power Plant. If passable, use road three-quarters of a mile south of plant for a better view but get permission before entering.

Also check the city park overlook, three blocks north of US Highway 3, and Carthage Lake, two miles south past the toll bridge to Illinois.

Highlights: Ingram has seen up to 150 eagles within 1000 feet in Carthage Lake. He suggests staying in your car so you don't disturb the birds. If you are heading south to Keokuk, watch for eagles soaring over the bluffs.

OTHER SITES ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER:

Pere Marquette State Park near Grafton, Illinois, at the confluence of the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers.

Keokuk, Iowa: A parking lot under the Keokuk bridge.

Warsaw, Illinois: The memorial at the top of the hill.

Canton, Missouri: Lock and Dam No. 20 offers views of 8-10 eagles.

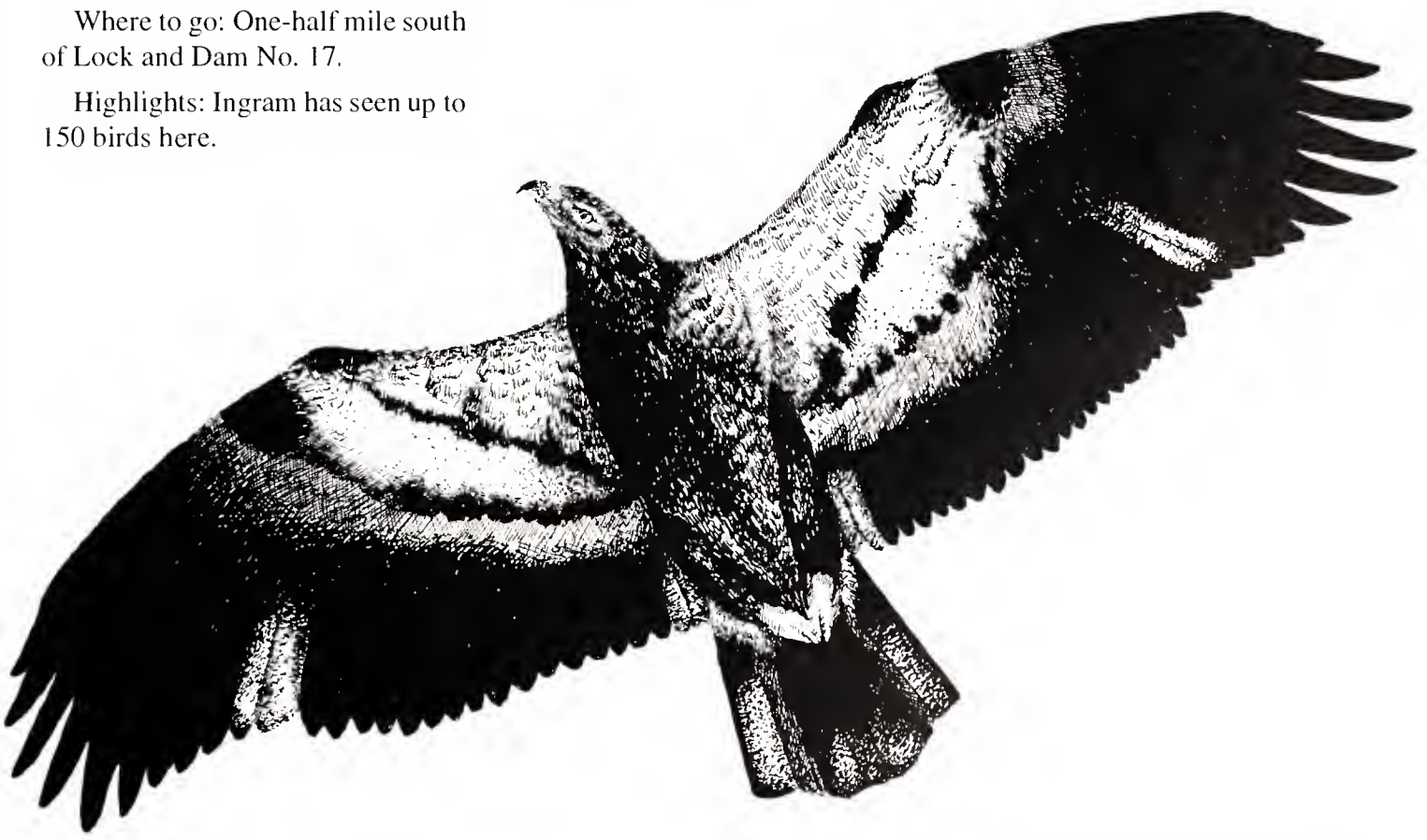
Clarksville, Missouri: Lock and Dam No. 24 offers good views from the power plant and the park south of town.

Winfield, Missouri: Lock and Dam No. 25. Eagles roost south of the ferry at Winfield.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Terry Ingram and Hal Cohen for providing valuable information on where to see Bald Eagles in winter.

— Reid Magney and Terri Melrose are writers living in Decatur.

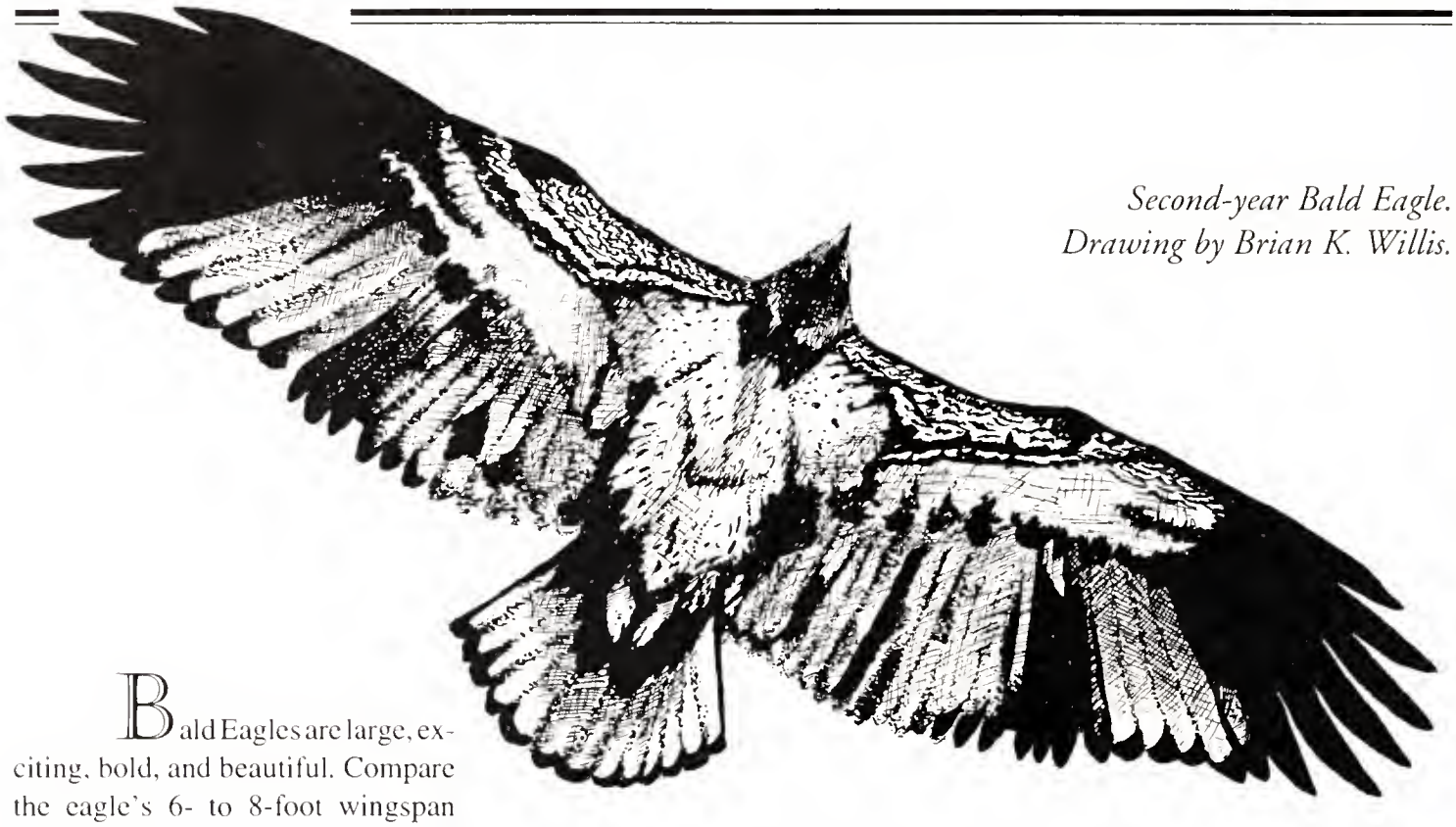


First-year Bald Eagle. Drawing by Brian K. Willis.

Bald Eagles

Distinguishing from Other Raptors and Determining Age

by Hal Cohen



Second-year Bald Eagle. Drawing by Brian K. Willis.

Bald Eagles are large, exciting, bold, and beautiful. Compare the eagle's 6- to 8-foot wingspan with the 3-foot wingspan of a Red-tailed Hawk and you are looking at a giant and a dwarf.

In North America, only the Golden Eagle and Turkey Vulture match the Bald Eagle in size; the California Condor tops it. Discerning between these species from afar can be difficult. And even though it is smaller, a white-headed bird like the Osprey also presents some identification problems, especially at a distance.

The small head size of the Osprey helps labels it. The bold black and white markings on the belly and inner lining of Osprey's wings are diagnostic. Although a Bald Eagle will crook its wings, never will the wings be as accentuated as are the Osprey's.

Flight behavior also offers clues when separating the Bald Eagle from the Turkey Vulture and Golden Eagle. Turkey Vultures fly in a dihedral, rocking motion when gliding or soaring; Bald Eagles spread their wings flat. The wings emerge from the body rather straight without indentations.

To separate Golden from Bald Eagles at a distance, note that the Golden holds its wings in a slight dihedral and that the wings are pinched where the trailing edge emerges from the body.

'The young eagles with their mottled, darker colorations more easily blend into the background and thus are camouflaged and protected from potential predators or food thieves.'

Identification confusion can occur between immature Bald and adult Golden Eagles. Young Bald Eagles and adult Golden Eagles appear large and dark when viewed from a distance or when lighting is poor. Up close, observers may note that adult Golden Eagles lack white throughout the entire body, although occasion-

ally a small amount of light feathering will remain at the base of the tail.

Also note that the head of the Bald Eagle projects beyond the wings more than half the length of the tail. In contrast, the Golden Eagle's tail is as much as three times the length of the head. So the head appears to be small in comparison to the tail.

Separating immature Golden Eagles from immature Bald Eagles is more straightforward. An immature Golden shows distinct white patches on the underwings and a bold white band at the base of the tail. Young Golden Eagles never brandish any white feathering outside the patches and tail band. White feathering anywhere beyond these areas usually signifies an immature Bald Eagle. Youthful Balds have varying degrees of white throughout the body.

A large dark bird with white patches on the underwings and a broad white band at the base of the tail is probably an immature Golden Eagle. A large dark bird with white feathering sprinkled about on the back, belly, tail, or wings is most likely to be an immature Bald Eagle.

Age Differences

Bald Eagles mature in four to five years after birth. Several terms are used in the literature to distinguish different age groups. The term juvenile is often given to first-year birds. For our purposes, a bird born in late spring and carrying through until following spring will be called a dark-plumaged bird. Second-year birds will be called white belly and third-year birds will be called mottled belly to correspond with those characteristics. Fourth-year birds will be called subadult. This age group is a transition to adulthood. If the white head and tail of an eagle appears to have some dirty feathers, you are probably looking at a four-year-old bird.

Bald Eagles reach maturity at five years of age. The plumage coloration; white head, white tail, egg-yolk yellow beak and yellow eyes (tending to increase toward white), with chocolate brown to black body and wings, is retained throughout the rest of the eagle's life.

Separating the younger bird phases is difficult because molting is a gradual process providing subtle differences throughout the year.

The first-year dark-plumaged birds present a stark contrast to later immature plumages. The head of these young birds is dark as are the beak and eyes. The entire body is rather dark, including the tail. Flecks of white may be found anywhere; but this is the only age with a really dark tail.

Identifying a second-year bird (white belly) gets a little tricky. What distinguishes this age group is the lighter brown head, a glossy slate beak, and an overall grayer and paler coloration than that of the dark-plumaged bird of the first year. The eyes at this stage are also turning lighter brown. The lower breast is mottled white and gray and the belly and underwings have a great deal of white. When I see a bird with a tremendous amount of white on the belly, I think second year. At this age, a dark terminal band on the tail can also be distinguished.

The third-year or mottled belly bird is similar to the second year but tends to be darker bodied with flecks of darker feathers on the white belly. The eyes become creamy colored and the beak takes on a grayish, yellowish cast. The dark tail band near the tip is still retained. Sometimes, the head of a three-year-old becomes fairly white with a dark eye stripe.

A classic fourth-year subadult bird has a dirty white head and tail, dull yellow eyes and beak, and a dark terminal band on the tail. The body is almost as dark as that of the adult.

Distinguishing Behavior of Various Age Groups

Over the years, I have wondered about age ratios and the reasons for color differences within a species. Knowing how to determine ages has helped me glean fascinating details about eagles by comparing seasonal data of ratios of immatures and adults. The variation in ratios from late fall into early spring is fascinating. The following is generally true of the Upper Mississippi Valley, Moline, IL north to LaCross, WI. In fall, the number of immature birds tends to be higher than adults. Immature birds leave northern territories earlier since their foraging prowess is not as well-tuned as in adults, especially when colder icy weather conditions prevail.

As the season progresses, the adult population increases within a winter range. In January and February, the ratio generally approaches three adults to one immature. A remarkable count made at Savanna in February 1993 yielded 225 eagles, 177 adults, and 55 immatures. In late winter, the migratory urge is heightened in adults, pushing them toward home territories and the nesting ritual.

Size differences between the age groups is evident. Youthful Bald Eagles have problems competing with adults or fleeing from predators so nature has provided them with some advantages. For example, immature birds have longer wings and tails compared to their bodies than adults. These features provide more buoyancy and lift, an advantage for soaring. As Bald Eagles mature, bones become more dense and the longer immature flight feathers molt to be replaced by standard adult sizes.

Potential adult eagle mates are attracted to each other based on coloration. Adult coloration is also a special message indicating the privilege of inhabiting a territory.

Meanwhile, the young eagles with their mottled, darker colorations more easily blend into the background and thus are camouflaged and protected from potential predators or food thieves.

Color differences also imply social status within eagle groups. Coloration in most animals provides visual signals that may influence the behavior of other animals especially within the same species. Important messages are passed from one individual to another through these differences. The subtle messages between the youthful Bald Eagles as they mature may never fully be understood, but the issue leaves open a realm of possibilities for future study.

Armed with your knowledge, why not take a trip to the Mississippi River in January or February to observe Bald Eagles? I particularly enjoy watching eagles at Fulton Dam just south of Savanna. When you observe Bald Eagles this winter, practice aging the immatures and then note and record the interesting behaviors of these giants in the sky.

— Hal Cohen is Professor of Biology at the College of DuPage, 22nd Street and Lambert Road, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137-6599.

Eagle Identification Key

1A Head and tail white, body dark ..... go to 2.

1B Head and tail other than described above ..... go to 3.

2A Head and tail pure white, body dark ..... Adult.

2B Head and tail dirty white (some dark feathers present), body dark ..... Transition, 4th year.

3A Head, body, and tail generally dark, very little white in feathers ..... 1st year.

3B Head and body has some to much white, especially in belly area ..... go to 4.

4A Head has brown hood, belly; wing coverts very white ..... 2nd year.

4B Head and breast brown; some white on belly; wing coverts with a scattering of dark in white ..... 3rd year.

Adult Bald Eagle. Drawing by Brian K. Willis.

First-year Bald Eagle. Drawing by Brian K. Willis.

'He nests high, as near to the sun as he can get, like a true bird of Jove and messenger of the star of day. He is a model parent and probably spends more time - upwards of six months - in rearing his family and giving his progeny a fair start in life than any other bird known to this continent.'

- Francis Herrick

Adult Bald Eagle, 1 January 1993, Arsenal Island, Rock Island County, Illinois. Photo by Reid Magney.

Birding Lake Forest's Open Lands

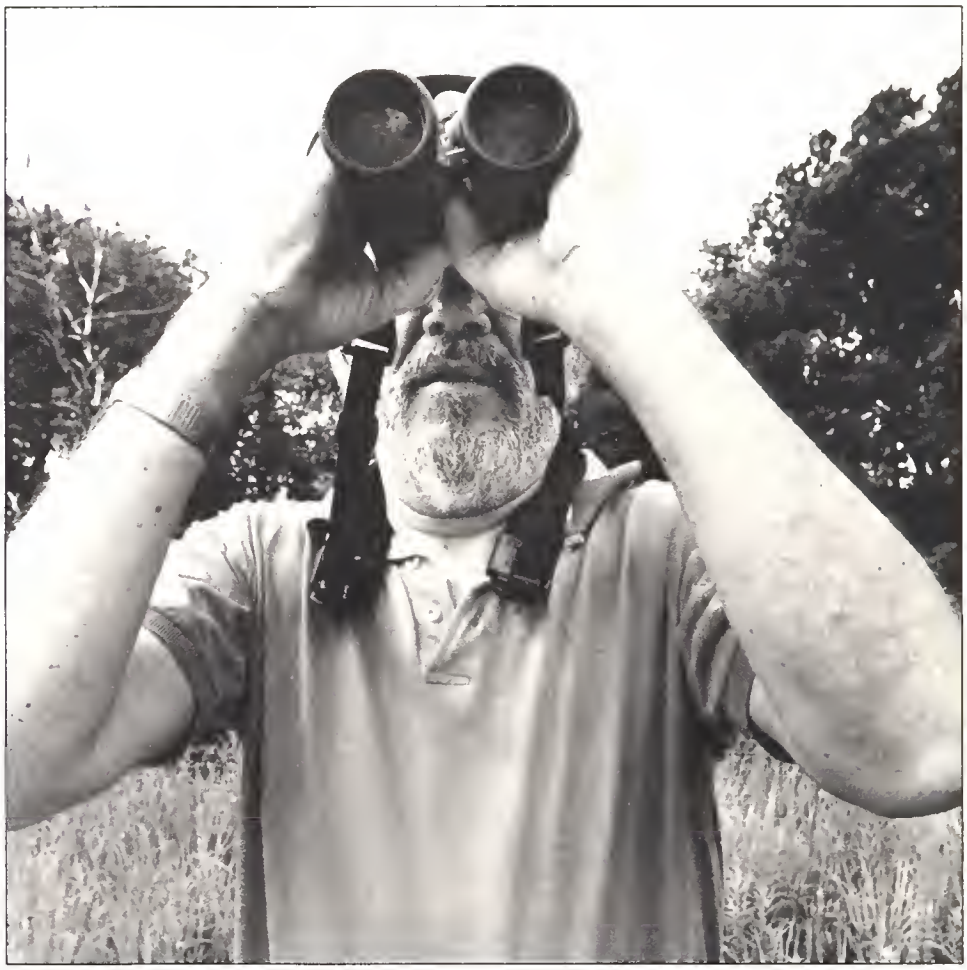
Year-long bird survey yields 102-species checklist

by William Moskoff

The residents of Lake Forest 30 miles north of Chicago think they live in "a special place." Such, in fact, was the title of a public television documentary on the Lake Forest Open Lands Association, a local conservation organization that has since 1970 purchased or been given land to set aside as permanent open space. Founded in 1967, the organization established the noble goal of protecting and preserving natural areas, an ambition that has since been achieved. What is perhaps unknown to local residents and others nearby is that the Lake Forest Open Lands properties are excellent places to bird.

The Open Lands comprises two major properties, the 100-acre Shaw Woods and Prairie, located in east Lake Forest at the western end of Laurel Avenue, and the 16 acres of the West Skokie Nature Preserve at Westleigh and Waukegan Roads in west Lake Forest. Shaw is dominated by virgin prairie and to a somewhat lesser degree has a substantial savanna at the southern end of the property. West Skokie, formerly a meadow, is now in the process of being turned back into prairie. What both have in common, and what helps make each such a good place to bird, is the Skokie River, which runs through both sites, the east branch through Shaw and the west branch through West Skokie.

After casually birding the open lands for about a year, I began to develop a checklist for the area and to that end I birded the two properties systematically from June 1, 1992 to May 31, 1993. Shaw is the better of the two for species diversity; in one year I identified 102 species there. In the spring and fall a variety of warblers can be seen near the Skokie River. Indeed, 18 species of warblers have been identified, including Connecticut, Mourning, and both waterthrushes. Belted Kingfishers have been seen flying up and down the water looking for a meal and both Great Blue and Green-backed Herons have staked out places on the banks. During the spring migration Solitary Sandpipers were seen from the bridge that marks the first place where you can see the water once you enter the property.



William Moskoff spent a year birding at Shaw Woods and Prairie and West Skokie River Nature Preserve in Lake Forest to compile a checklist. Photo by Rob Dicker. Courtesy of Pioneer Press.

Early on a cool mid-April evening, when a small group went to see American Woodcocks perform their spring mating ritual in the middle of the prairie, they were also treated to three Northern Harriers, a male, female, and immature, flying low over the prairie in search of prey. Later that same evening, an overflight of about 200 Bonaparte's Gulls temporarily distracted the group from its woodcock vigil.

A special treat at Shaw are the Marsh Wrens found in the sedges and cattails near the center trail of the prairie. If you want to see the wrens, go some late summer morning when the dew mixes with the sunrise and the song of the wren breaks the quiet of the day as you approach the sedges.

There are no shortage of hawks, including Red-shouldered and Northern Goshawk, which have been seen flying over the property, not to mention migrating kettles of Broad-winged Hawks and the Red-tailed Hawks that commonly soar over the prairie.

In late 1991, a wetland area was added to Shaw just east of the river on the prairie and it has yielded, among others, Blue-winged Teal and Gadwall. The only drawback is that the marsh is close to a trail where people walk their dogs and frequently the ducks are scared off.

Shaw also hosts various thrushes and sparrows. Seen on the property have been Chipping, Field, Fox, Song, Lincoln's, Swamp, White-throated, and White-crowned Sparrows, and Rufous-sided Towhees. There are also Veery, Gray-cheeked (rarely), Swainson's, Hermit, and Wood Thrush in the woods and along the river.

Shaw has its summer residents including Eastern Bluebirds, which nest in two places: the northeast part of the prairie and in the northern part of the meadow at the oak woodland opening. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, House Wrens, and Common Yellowthroats also nest here. Red-headed Woodpeckers return to nest in the northeastern part of the prairie. You can see their young in the fall before they all leave for the winter. It should be noted that Shaw yielded the second highest species count of any place in Lake Forest on the 1992 Christmas Bird Count. Two of rarer birds seen on the count include Cedar Waxwing and Carolina Wren.

As a place to bird, West Skokie has both less area and less variety of habitat. Still, in the same one year period that I birded Shaw, I saw 62 species at West Skokie, several of which were different from Shaw. In the old growth oaks on the east side, I have seen Black-billed Cuckoo and Warbling Vireo in the same tree. American Tree Sparrows can be found along the river at Skokie and I have never seen them at Shaw. A Great-horned Owl nested in an old Red-tailed Hawk's nest this winter on the eastern most part of the property.

A special effort has been made on both properties to bring back bluebirds. Last spring, 14 bluebird boxes were placed at various spots at West Skokie and at least two pair of bluebirds were seen nesting, although they had to fight off the Tree Swallows that wanted to use the boxes themselves. There are about a half dozen such boxes at Shaw.

While the Lake Forest Open Lands do not rank with the great locales for birding Chicagoland, birders could do much worse than visit these two properties. If nothing else, a walk through the prairie, especially July through September, when the wildflowers burst into their full magnificence, will console any soul. If, as Aldo Leopold once said, solitude is a natural resource, the Lake Forest Open Lands is a good place to find it...and not an inconsequential variety of birds, either.

A Red-tailed Hawk soars over the Shaw Prairie in Lake Forest, Lake County, on 13 July 1993. Photo by Rob Dicker. Courtesy of Pioneer Press.

Editor's Note: To get to the West Skokie River Nature Preserve, take the 294 Illinois tollway to the Route 60 exit. Go east to Route 41, then south to Westleigh Road. Then backtrack west toward Waukegan Road (Route 43). Note the clearly marked parking area on Westleigh Road, just east of Waukegan Road.

To get to Shaw from Route 60 and 41, go north to Deerpath Ave., east to Green Bay Road, north to Laurel Ave., then back west to the end of Laurel. The entrance will be straight ahead.

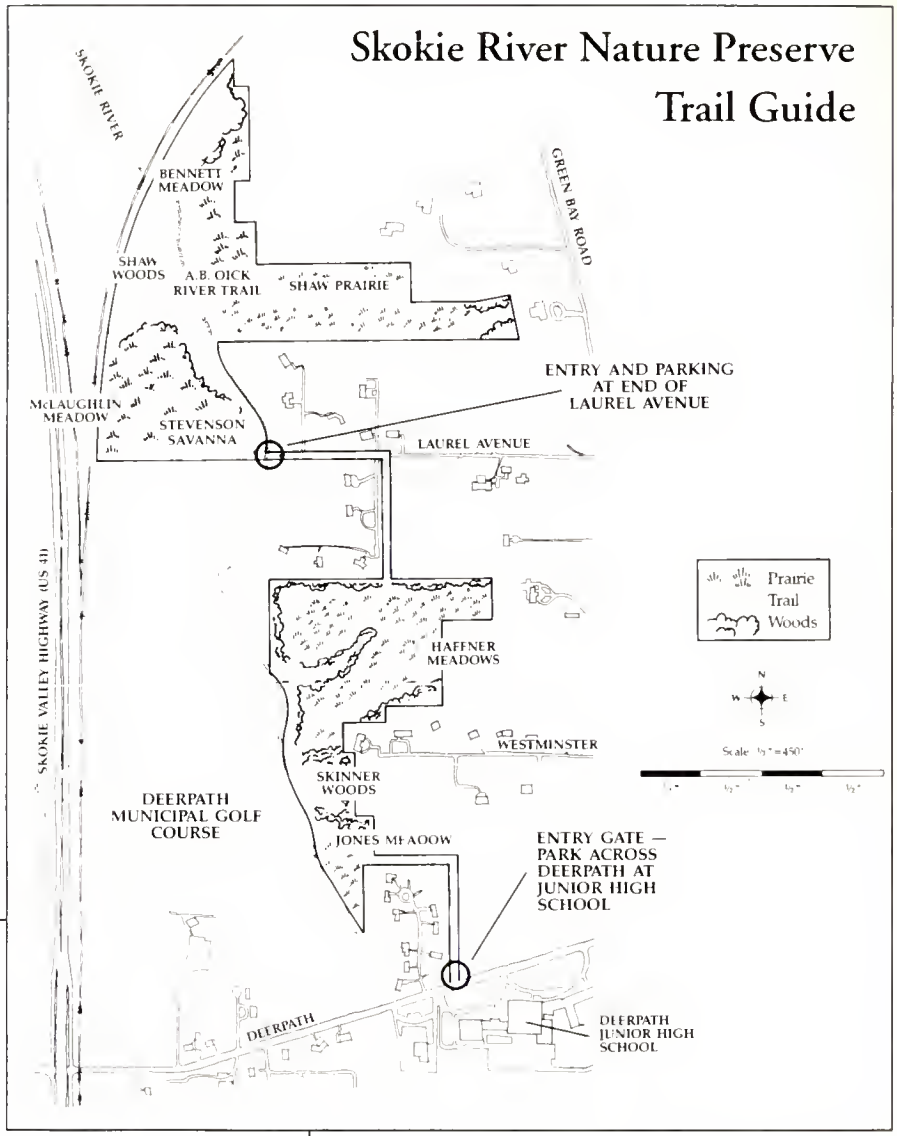
A $1 fee is charged to non-members for a one-day use permit. Annual membership levels begin at $35. These permits are available Monday through Friday at:

Lake Forest City Hall
220 East Deerpath or
Municipal Services Building
110 East Laurel or
Public Safety Building
255 West Deerpath.

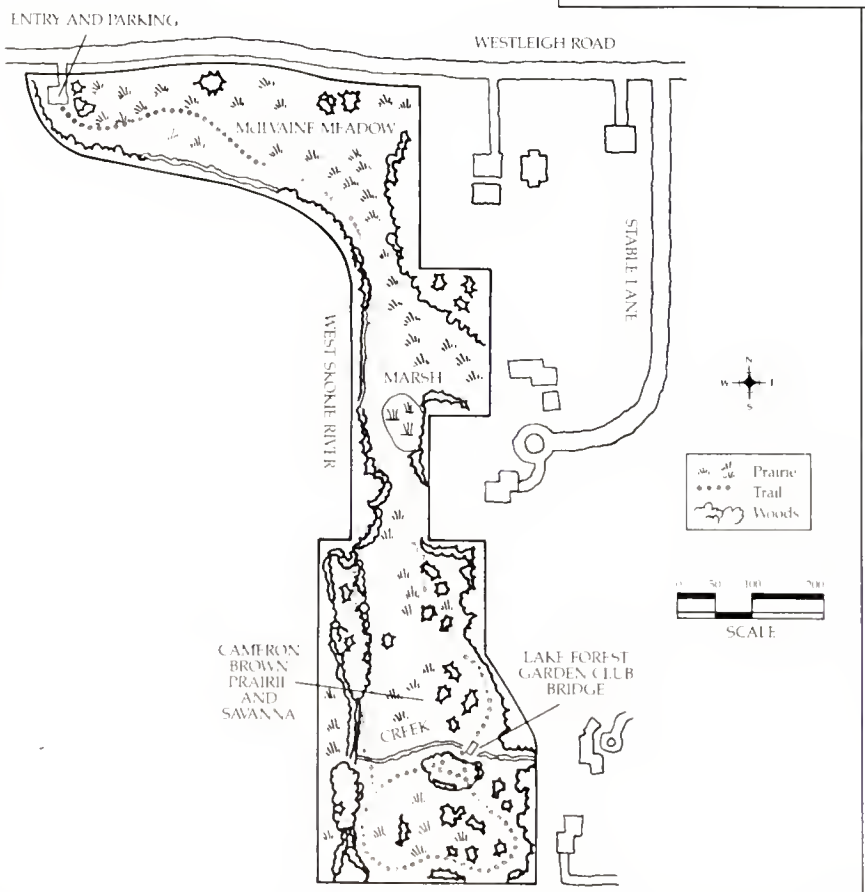
For more information and to obtain a field checklist compiled by Moskoff, call the Lake Forest Open Lands Association at 708-234-3880.

William Moskoff is Hollender Professor of Economics at Lake Forest College, 555 N. Sheridan Road, Lake Forest, IL 60045. He is also a Lake Forest Open Lands volunteer.

Skokie River Nature Preserve Trail Guide



West Skokie River Nature Preserve Trail Guide



Backyard Rarities

by Sue Friscia

Ann Minckler couldn't believe her eyes. There on her thistle feeder was a bird that looked like a rainbow. She checked her field guide. Only one bird fit that description, a Painted Bunting. But it didn't belong in her Makanda backyard or for that matter anywhere in the state.

But here it was. She had to share her good fortune, so she quickly called Ben Gelman. He was skeptical at first, but finally agreed to come over to verify the bird. The moment he called the Springfield hotline, folks started dropping by Ann's backyard to see one of North America's most colorful songbirds.

The bunting enjoyed Ann's hospitality from 20 April to 22 April 1993. It was photographed and videotaped for documentation as Illinois' first state record pending approval of the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee. Ann's son commented that she was finally getting the credit she deserved after feeding birds for 22 years.

Ann's yard is landscaped for wildlife. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds drink nectar from her clematis. Orchard Orioles enjoy her peach trees. Bluebirds, a Pileated Woodpecker, Carolina Chickadees, a Blue Grosbeak, and House Wrens have all visited her backyard.

Ann's is not the only Illinois backyard that has attracted great birds. On 30 January 1991, Lisa Granbur looked out her backyard window in Warrenville and was shocked to find Red Crossbills munching on oilers in her terra-cotta feeding dish. Said Lisa, "I had to be peeled off the ceiling. I was that excited." The crossbill was a lifer for her and it had happened right in her backyard.

Lisa counted three females and two males. They usually came in pairs in the early morning or late afternoon remaining for about 15 minutes. Lisa and her family enjoyed the crossbills until 15 April.

'One day when I focused my binoculars on a bright red spot in my neighbor's bushes thinking it was a male cardinal, it turned out to be an impaled mouse: breakfast for a Northern Shrike.'

"1991 was the best winter at my feeders," said Lisa. "Do you want to hear about my Pine Warbler?" It arrived 18 February and stayed until 31 March." According to H. David Bohlen's Birds of Illinois, Pine Warblers usually winter in southeastern United States but some have attempted to winter in the southern part of Illinois. Out of nine winter records, only one stayed longer than a day and that was at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge in 1975. Lisa's may be the only wintering record for northern Illinois.

Again landscaping played a big part in Lisa's successful winter of backyard bird watching. One neighbor has two huge spruce trees and another has a row of evergreens which attracts Pine Warblers and crossbills.

Winter seems the best time to see vagrants at my feeders, too. One day when I focused my binoculars on a bright red spot in my neighbor's bushes thinking it was a male cardinal, it turned out to be an impaled mouse: breakfast for a Northern Shrike. At that time I had no idea how difficult it was to find a shrike in Cook County let alone in a suburban backyard. Unfortunately, the bird did not remain long enough for me to call the hotline and invite you all over.

If you do see an unusual bird at your feeder this winter, or even if you are not sure, call the birding hotline or me. We're happy to help. The hotline number for northern Illinois is 708-571-1522. For the rest of the state, call 217-785-1083.

Drop me a note and tell me about a memorable bird or interesting behavior you have witnessed at your feeders. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sue Friscia
3417 W. 123rd St.
Alsip, IL 60658
(708) 371-2124

Five Species of Geese on the 1992 Union County Christmas Bird Count

Each year the Horseshoe Lake and Union County Christmas Bird Counts in southern Illinois are scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday, respectively, before Christmas. These two count circles include the wintering home of up to 500,000 Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) and excellent populations of many other species. The annual species totals for these two CBCs vary from the low 80,000s to the upper 90,000s.

It is not unusual, every year, for someone to identify one or more "unsuspected" species on these counts; 1992 was no exception. At Union County, the count crew had heard that a Ross' Goose (*Chen rossii*), which would be a first for the 22-year-old count, had been present there a few days earlier. On count day, four parties were assigned to various parts of the refuge to count all species and search for the Ross' Goose. Among the myriad Canada Geese, it was impossible to miss the 85 Snow/Blue Geese (*Chen caerulescens*). The Ross' Goose, in immature plumage, was found, but not always with the majority of Snow Geese.

As the refuge parties regrouped for lunch and afternoon assignments, an adult White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*) was spotted in the shallow pond in front of the refuge headquarters.

After completing the basic afternoon surveys, I was back on the refuge scoping the large feeding flock of Canada Geese attempting to relocate the Ross' Goose. Had the Ross' Goose been findable, I probably would have missed the Brant (*Branta bernicla*), barely more than 100 yards away at the close edge of the feeding flock of geese. We never did relocate the Ross' Goose, but had the Brant in view for more than a half-hour — allowing at least eight observers to record this fifth species of geese on the 23 December 1992 Union County CBC.

— Vernon M. Kleen, RR #2, Box 481, Athens, IL 62613.

Three Lake Michigan Mew Gull sightings: Two in Chicago, One in Waukegan

On 22 and 25 February 1993, I found two distinctly different adult Mew Gulls (*Larus canus*) at Montrose Harbor, Chicago, Cook County. Both of these birds were in basic (winter) plumage although the first individual was considerably darker headed than the second. Also, both birds had obviously darker mantles than the accompanying Ring-billed Gulls. The birds had dark eyes and a small unmarked yellowish bill. All of the Mew Gulls I have seen in Chicago have been with Ring-billed Gulls perhaps lending credence that this rare gull tends to associate with a morphologically similar gull species.

—Robert Hughes, 696 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago, IL 60613

At 1 p.m. 21 January 1993, I received a telephone call from Danny Diaz who had just seen his "lifer" Mew Gull (*Larus canus*) at the Waukegan lake front south harbor (Lake County) on some "pack ice" off the drive-up parking lot. One-half hour later I arrived at this location and immediately was able to spot the Mew Gull with its obviously darker gray mantle than the Ring-billed Gulls (at least two shades darker gray); dark grayish streaked head, dark brown pupil and black iris, all yellow bill except for the slight gray smudge at the gonys, and all yellowish legs and feet. The tail was all white except for some trace of gray smudges about 1 inch from the tip on at least two inner rectrices. This lead me to believe that this was an adult basic (winter) plumaged bird just completing its third-year molt. I was able to "chum" the gull in with bread as close as five feet outside my car window. I did not have my camera but the next day both Jim Neal of Zion and I were able to take excellent still photographs and video of the bird while it fed on bread at the old harbor. This Mew Gull was last reported seen at the Waukegan Harbor area on 25 January 1993 and represents the first confirmed record of the species for Lake County. Mlodinow (1986 *Chicago Area Birds*) does not even list the bird in his species accounts.

During the last winter (1991-1992) four Mew Gull were observed in the Chicago area (*Meadowlark*, 1:103). This winter's three sightings plus a county first for Will County (see Winter Field Notes in this issue) recorded by Joe B. Milosevich brings a Chicago area total to eight sightings the last two winters and at least 13 sightings for the state.

— David B. Johnson, 504 Crown Point Drive, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089

Rock Wren Winters at Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge

A rainy January cold front had just passed through southern Illinois and I knew this might be a perfect time to look for gulls and ducks at the dam and spillway of Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge (Williamson County). With this in mind on 14 January 1993, I set forth on my lunch hour in search of any unusual gulls which might be attracted by thermal-shocked gizzard shad which spill over the dam. The shad are easy pickings for many gulls. Pulling up at the parking area at the west end of the dam, I surveyed the lake which was teeming with waterbirds: a couple of loons, a very large raft of ducks (mostly scaup), several groups of Horned Grebes, and of course several hundred swirling gulls. It was a typical birding dilemma: deciding what to focus on in a short time. I chose gulls and walked three-fourths the way down the rip-rapped dam. Almost immediately after setting up my scope I noticed a little brown bird in the corner of my scope view that popped up like a little penguin bobbing with its knees in a rather rigid vertical upright position. It was ducking in and out of the rocks which were about 1- to 2-feet wide. No vegetation was nearby.

I instantly knew I had found a Rock Wren (*Salpinctes obsoletus*). I noted the following details: overall a rather gray-brown lightly white-spotted wren with dark legs and feet; tan wash to the flanks; faint gray-brown streaking on the whitish breast, and a faint eye line. Needless to say, I couldn't concentrate on any of the hundreds of ducks and gulls that were around and, after savoring this rare find, I raced to call Todd Fink and Judy DeNeal.

The Rock Wren stayed at the wildlife refuge through the winter period (28 Feb. 1993) and was seen by many observers including Illinois Ornithological Society field trip participants in late January. Todd Fink took excellent photographs of the wren which were diagnostic and confirmed this as a first record for the refuge and the county.

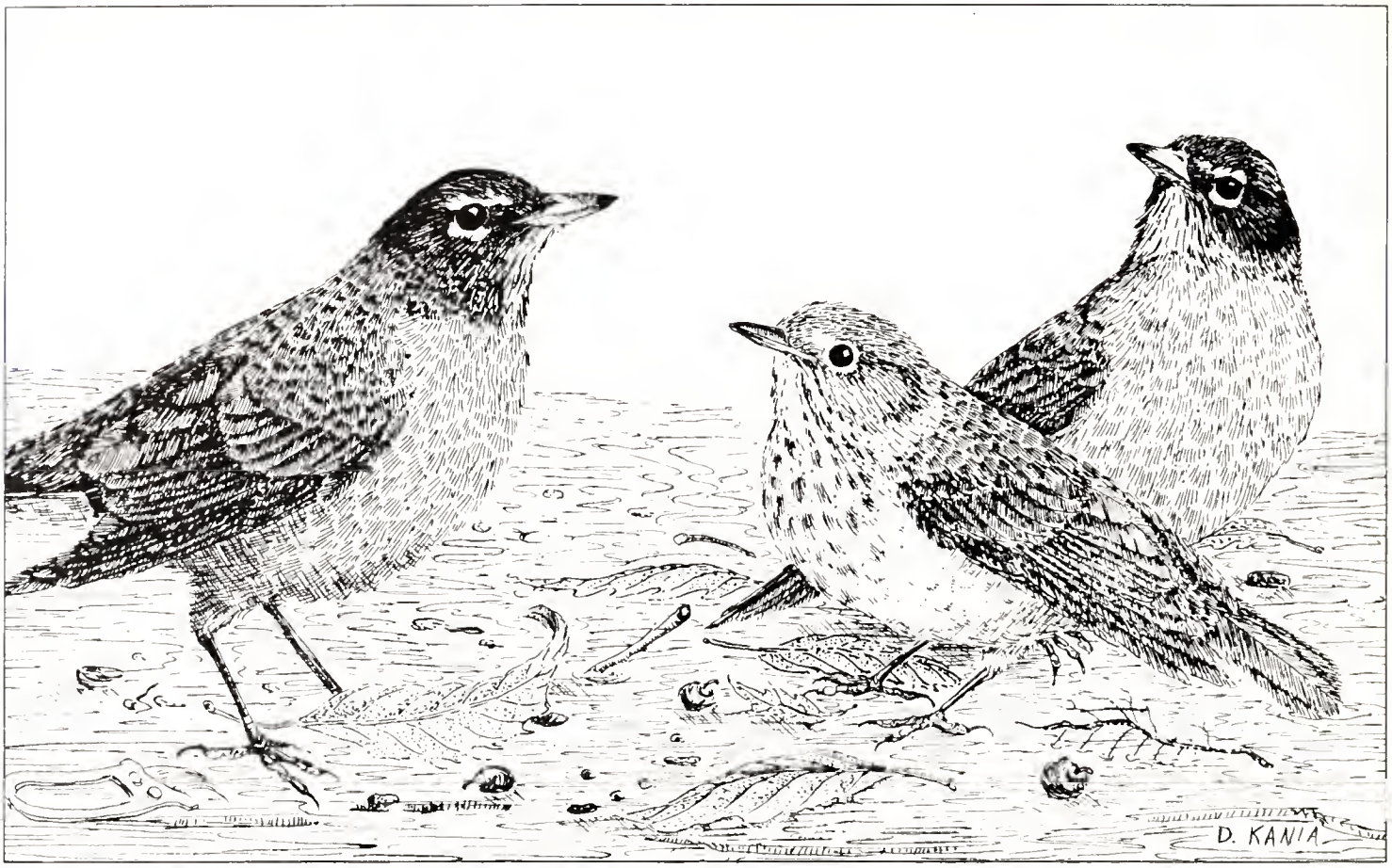
Interestingly, the bird was discovered during the severest part of the winter. For several nights, the temperature dropped into the lower teens. In addition, two separate storms dumped about 20 inches of snow. Inclement weather did not seem to reduce the myriad spiders which inhabited the rocky area. Perhaps the wren subsisted on spiders and other insects in the rocks. Todd Fink saw the bird eat a moth and heard it sing on one occasion. I also heard the buzzy "tick-ear" call note once.

— Robert Danley, 2201 Clay St., Murphysboro, IL 62966

Swainson's Thrush Seen on Evanston North Shore Christmas Bird Count

We knew the routine well, Eugene and David Wachtel, Bernie Harrold and I were to cover the Skokie Lagoons in northern Cook County for the Evanston North Shore Christmas Bird Count. We missed the "old timers" like Seymour Rubin, Lynne and Fair Carpenter, but we got our assignments, and we knew the birding "hot spots" to cover in our area. One of the best spots was the effluent stream or channel along the west edge of the Skokie Lagoons just south of Dundee Rd. (Rt. 68) and bordering the east edge of Interstate 94. On a cold winter's day one can see steam rising eerily along the expressway; 26 December 1992 was no exception. Having parked on Dundee Rd., we began our search in brisk 13-degree chilly but clear weather with some northwesterly winds.

Walking down the bike path which parallels the ditch, we spotted some American Robins in the buckthorn. We heard the diagnostic sharp non-musical "check" call chips of Yellow-rumped Warblers between us and the stream's edge. We noted several of these lingering warblers along with an occasional White-throated Sparrow, a surprisingly late Ruby-crowned Kinglet, several Song Sparrows, and Cedar Waxwings. But none of these birds could rival the bird Dave Wachtel first spotted through the mist along the west bank of the stream along with an American Robin huddled close to the water's edge probing a black mud bank. Bernie Harrold, the Wachtels and I soon focused on



Swainson's Thrush with American Robins. Drawing by Denis Kania.

an obvious smaller thrush with a distinct complete buffy (yellowish-tan) eye ring. We exclaimed together, "It's a Swainson's Thrush!"

The Swainson's Thrush (*Catharas ustulatus*) was a bird to be expected during spring and fall migration in the Lagoons, but not during winter. We could not find the bird listed on my son's 29-year compilation checklist of birds recorded on the Evanston North Shore Christmas Bird Count. We watched the bird for at least 10 minutes additionally recording the olive-brown forehead, crown, nape, scapulars, back, rump, and tail (the tail appearing very short in relation to a body length unlike a Hermit Thrush). The bird had a buffy auricular area, throat with long black whiskers, chin, and face. It also sported a peculiar buffy line at the bottom of its face. Flesh-colored legs were noted as well as the dark thrush-like bill with a flesh-colored base to the lower mandible. Coverts and wings were brownish-olive with no obvious wing bars or markings except a slightly lighter and faint line on the median coverts. The bird showed a whitish breast with large blurry dark spots on the top. The bill and undertail coverts were whitish. The flanks were grayish-olive.

The next day my son photographed the bird, and ornithologist, Dr. Laurence Binford, and Larry Fink of Glenview recorded details about this species. Binford suggested that the bird was in basic (winter) plumage based on the rather bright color of the face, throat, and breast. The multiple observer sight documentations and photographs are on file with the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee.

— *Wib Johnson, 180 Lake St., Glencoe, Il 60022*

Editor's note: Swainson's Thrush was not recorded in North American on the previous (1991-1992) 92nd Christmas Bird Count. (American Birds 46:1054-1053). The Swainson's Thrush is of accidental occurrence anywhere in North America during the Christmas Count period. According to Bohlen (1989 The Birds of Illinois) the species normally winters from Mexico south to Argentina and Paraguay.

Bohemian Waxwing in Winnebago County

On 20 February 1993 I led a field trip for the North Central Illinois Ornithological Society to the Klehm Forest Preserve on the south edge of

Rockford adjacent to Illinois Highway 2. The Klehm Forest Preserve is the former Rockford Nursery and harbors one of the largest collections of conifers and crabapples in Illinois. While scanning a large flock of 300 Cedar Waxwings, Lynda Johnson and I noticed that one bird just to the left of the highest branch of a black cherry tree was larger and grayer. We immediately recognized the bird as a lone Bohemian Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*). The bird was to our north in good light on this partly sunny day.

While everyone was gathering together to view the bird, it flew down to feed amongst the crabapples within 25-30 feet from me. At this distance, I noticed the rufous undertail coverts and the white, red, and yellow wing markings. The bird was among a feeding frenzy of waxwings but 11 observers including: Lee Johnson, Brad Grover, Roy Morris, Marian Doyle, Marjory Rand (et al.) managed to see the bird before a large accipiter flushed the skittish waxwings up into the canopy trees.

Despite attempts to flush the waxwings into a more viewable area, we could not relocate the species for others who wanted to see it. The next day local birders still could not find the Bohemian Waxwing among as many as 600 Cedar Waxwings in the preserve. Lee Johnson said this was the first county record in 30 years. The Klehm Forest Preserve is open by permit only while under development as the Klehm Arboretum and Northern Illinois Botanic Garden. It promises to be an Illinois birding hot spot with its unique blend of vegetation, shrubs, and trees and has already produced recent sightings of Pine Grosbeak (Dec. 1989/Jan. 1990) both crossbills, redpolls, and winter bluebirds.

— Alan Branhagen, 2222 Hancock St., Rockford, IL 61103

Solitary Vireo in Early Winter at Springfield

Solitary Vireos (*Vireo solitarius*) occasionally linger late to early November in Illinois. My latest fall date for Sangamon County was 17 November 1991. On 10 December 1992 I was at Lincoln Memorial Gardens at the south end of Lake Springfield. It had snowed 2 inches during the night but the 35-degree temperature was melting the snow. I was surprised to see a Solitary Vireo at mid-height (8-10 feet) in brushy trees near a flock of Black-capped Chickadees, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Golden-crowned Kinglets.

The chunky vireo-sized bird had a gray head with white spectacles, gray-green back, two white wingbars, yellow sides and flanks, and white throat and underparts. Actually the bill on this species of vireo is quite small, but I could see it was hooked. The legs were bluish-gray. Also, surprisingly, in the flock was an immature Orange-crowned Warbler feeding near the ground in brush. I watched both birds for a minute or two but the flock moved quickly and soon disappeared. The next day I found the Solitary Vireo in the same place, but it was alone this time. I believe these two birds were just late migrants since I did not see the vireo after 11 December 1992 and the warbler 14 December 1992.

Because of the coloration, the Solitary Vireo looked to be of the nominate eastern race. Although there are a few late November records for this vireo, apparently this is the first December record for Illinois. It could be expected to show up in southern Illinois in winter eventually.

— H. David Bohlen, Illinois State Museum, 1920 South 10 1/2 St., Springfield, IL 62703

Northern Parula Warbler: Second Winter Record for Illinois

Early morning New Year's Day 1993 Myrna Deaton and I left Decatur to participate in the Middle Fork River Valley Christmas Count near Danville in Vermilion County. We often help Steve Bailey on this count, held on the first day of the year, as it gives us a chance to get a good start on a year list. Little did we know that we would see a bird most bird watchers would not see until much later in the year.

The temperature was 20 degrees. Most of the water was frozen with only the fast-flowing rivers left open. The wind was brisk. The morning's birding went quickly as we recorded the normal species seen on a Christmas count with nothing much out of the ordinary until we arrived at the Tom Prillaman farm near Henning in Vermilion County. Steve Bailey had requested we check the suet and seed feeders at the farm. However, not many birds were visiting the feeders except for a few Downy Woodpeckers and some American Goldfinches. We talked to Prillaman who informed us that we had seen most of what was around at the feeders.

The area, however, commanded a good view of the surrounding river bottom, planted fields, and a white pine

grove which had been planted as a wind break for the home. We scouted the surrounding area including the pine woods but did not find any new species to add to the day 's birding list.

By 10 a.m. we had left and were driving slowly down the farm lane past the white pine grove when Myrna Deaton and I spotted a bird with a yellow throat about 6 feet up on a sunny outside branch of the pine trees. We knew we had a warbler as the bird's bill was narrow and sharply pointed. The size and yellow throat made us think of Common Yellowthroat and maybe Yellow-throated Warbler, but neither fit what we were seeing. When the bird turned its back we instantly knew it was a Northern Parula Warbler (*Parula americana*) by the greenish-yellow patch on the upper back plus the distinct white wingbars and partial white eye rings.

We documented the bird by taking notes and comparing our bird's field marks to the field guides. We noted that it was an immature 1st basic (winter) plumaged bird.

About this time I remembered I had my camera in the trunk of my car along with my 400mm telephoto lens. But would the bird remain? Backing the car up 50 feet, I stepped out to get the camera and asked Myrna Deaton to watch the bird. I was just about ready when she informed me the bird had flown across the road, out of sight, to the other pine trees. Luckily we found the bird almost immediately and I was able to get six fairly good photos. We watched the bird as it searched for spiders and wintering bugs in the needle sheaves of the pine trees. We presumed this might be how it had survived the harsh winter.

Even though Steve Bailey looked for the bird at a later date, to our knowledge, the bird was never seen again. Bohlen (1989, *The Birds of Illinois*) lists only one other winter record for Illinois; that of an individual bird which spent the winter feeding on "peanut butter at a feeder" from mid-December 1982-early February 1983 in Belleville, St. Clair County. The species normally winters from northern Mexico to Belize in Central America.

—Richard Palmer, 3423 Spring Creek Road, Decatur, IL 62526

Avian Annals

by Eric Walters

10 years ago:

On a cold December day, a birder discovered a dark-mantled gull with "intense pink"legs near Alton along the Mississippi River. Further study over the next few weeks revealed that the bird was an Asian species the Slaty-backed Gull. The sighting established the first record of this species in the lower 48 states outside of Washington state. (Illinois Audubon Bulletin 209:26-30.)

A birder planned an Illinois "big year", trying to observe as many species from 1 January to 31 December as possible. He recorded 307 species which tied the state record. (Illinois Audubon Bulletin 208:50.)

20 years ago:

A bird resembling a Bonaparte's Gull was soon identified by its red bill and became Illinois' first sighting of a Black-headed Gull. (Illinois Audubon Bulletin 167:18.)

30 years ago:

A Boreal Chickadee was observed at a Dixon feeder during February. The species has not been recorded in Illinois since. (Audubon Field Notes 17:329.)

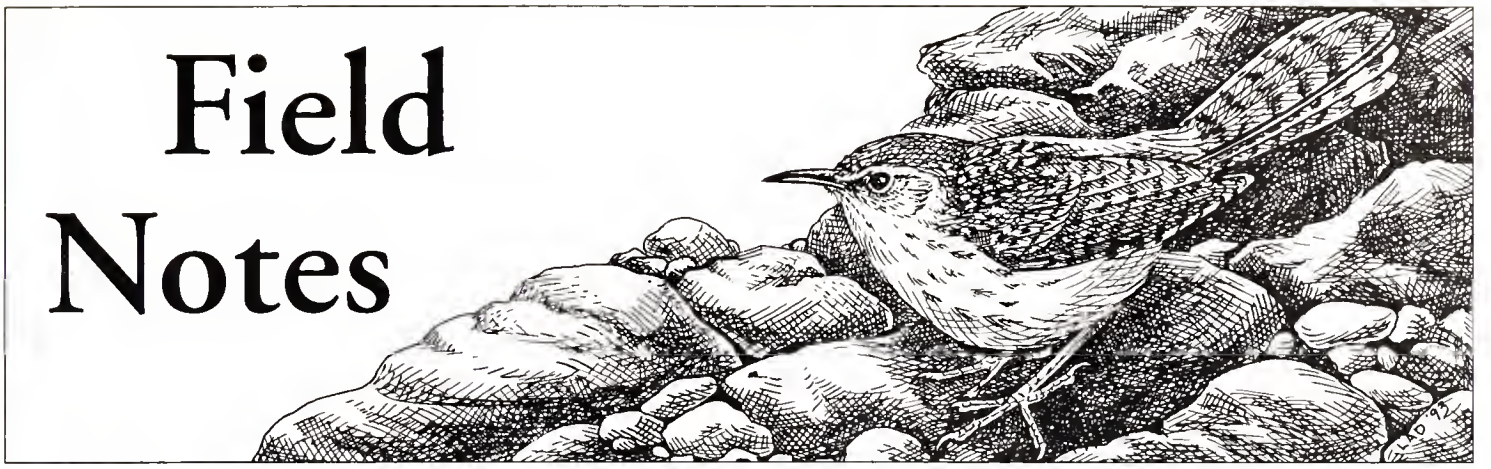
40 years ago:

The most interesting species found on the Christmas Bird Counts was a Townsend's Solitaire at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, Cook County. (Mlodinow, Chicagoland Birds, 1984, p. 184.)

43 years ago:

A birder traveling between Madison, Wisconsin and Freeport collected dead Eastern Screech Owls hit by cars during an 18 year period. Of the 235 birds found, 61 percent were the gray color phase and 39 percent were the red phase. (Auk 71:205.)

Field Notes



1992 - 93 Winter

by Robert F. Danley

The 92-93 winter season appeared typical in terms of numbers and diversity of the usual wintering species, but was outstanding for lingering migrants and vagrants. Highlights were two first state records (pending Illinois Ornithological Records Committee approval): **Glaucous-winged Gull** and **Curve-billed Thrasher**. A **Pacific Loon** and **Solitary Vireo** were observed during December establishing first time state records for this month. A lingering **Swainson's Thrush** and **Northern Parula Warbler** were also outstanding finds; both were discovered on Christmas Bird Counts. A **Tree Swallow** was found in January, also a first time state record for this month.

Several other noteworthy species occurred during the early winter probably due to the above normal temperatures. Cool and wet could describe much of the winter with the harsh weather of cold and snow not arriving until mid-February. December temperatures averaged two degrees above normal and finished slightly above normal for precipitation. January magnified the warming trend and finished five degrees above normal with an additional 1.8 inches of precipitation above the norm. February brought a shift back to Cold weather with temperatures dipping below average by 1.7 degrees and slightly below normal precipitation. Snowfall also was heaviest in this month with the southern third of the state receiving up to two feet. Much lesser amounts of snow, three to six inches, fell statewide during December and January.

Continuing a trend from last winter, open water conditions allowed many waterbirds to winter or linger late. Raptor reports were slightly above normal with both Northern Harrier and Rough-legged Hawk still being found in scattered pockets. Gulls seemed to be below normal in total numbers with the usual number of species being seen. Owl reports were normal with Snowies almost exclusively reported from Chicago's Meigs Field. The winter finches were absent or in low numbers.

Other noteworthy records (not previously mentioned above) this winter were: Eared Grebe, **Western Grebe, Brant, Eurasian Wigeon**, Virginia Rail, **Dunlin, Mew Gull, California Gull, Rock Wren**, House Wren, Orange-crowned Warbler, **Nashville Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak** and **Dickcissel**.

This seasonal report contains the most significant observational records during the winter season statewide. Some records are not included here because they may be considered either late fall or early spring migrants. These will appear in the appropriate seasonal reports.

Many thanks to the many contributors who are acknowledged in an initialized format after the corresponding field record and collectively in the following list: Alan Anderson, Cindy Alberico, Jack Armstrong, Louise Augustine, Melissa Anderson, Alan Branhagan (ABr), David Becker (DBe), David Bohlen, David Brenner (DBr), Laurence Binford, Michael Baum, Richard Biss, Steve Bailey, Elizabeth Chato, Karin Cassel, Peggy Camden

Field Notes heading drawing of a Rock Wren by Leslie A. DeCourcey

(PCa), Robert Chapel, Roger Coons(RCo), Robert Danley (BD), Donald Dann (DDn), Judy DeNeal, Myrna Deaton, Peter Dring, Betsy Fikejs, David Fletcher (DFl), Peter Friederici, Susan Friscia, Todd Fink, Michelle Georgi(MGe), Jack Hayward (JHy), Kanae Hirabayashi, Robert Hughes, David Johnson, Wib Johnson, Denis Kania, Peter Kasper, Tom Koz, Vernon Kleen, Walter Krawiec, James Landing, Joe Lill (JLi), Dan Miller (DMi), Joe Milosevich, John McKee(JMc), Keith McMullen, Lynn McKeown, Walter Marcisz, Jim Neal, Dennis Oehmke, Richard Palmer, Dan Richards (DRi), Gerald Rosenband, Kevin Richmond, Rita Renwick (RRe), Harriet Rylaarsdam, Alan Stokie, Darrell Shambaugh, James Smith, Jim Solum (JSo), Luke Stowe, Leonard Stanley (LSt), Mark Seiffert (MSe), Wes Serafin, Jack Van Benthuysen (JV), Alan Welby, Cindy Watkins, David Wachtel (DWa), Doris Westfall (DWe), Dan Williams, Eric Walters, Geoff Williamson and Richard Whitton. Special thanks to Vernon Kleen who critically reviewed this report.

As a printing aide, the following abbreviations have been used throughout this report:

ad.	= adult
subad.	= subadult
imm.	= immature
*	= documented record
ph.	= photograph
resp.	= respectively
m.ob.	= many observers
Co.	= County
L	= Lake
R	= River
C.A.	= Conservation Area
F. P.	= Forest Preserve
F.W.A.	= Fish & Wildlife Area
N.W.R.	= National Wildlife Refuge
N.C.	= Nature Center
N.P.	= Nature Preserve
S.P.	= State Park
S.F.	= State Forest
et al.	= other observers present
MC:	= maximum count
LD:	= late date
Bald.L	= Baldwin Lake (Randolph Co.)
Carl.L	= Carlyle Lake (Clinton Co.)
CBG	= Chicago Botanic Garden (Cook Co.)
C'dale	= Carbondale (Jackson Co.)
Chi	= Chicago's lakefront parks-excluding JP (Cook Co.)
Clin.L	= Clinton Lake (De Witt Co.)
COLSP	= Chain O' Lakes S.P. (Lake Co.)
CONWR	= Crab Orchard N.W.R. (Williamson Co.)
Fermi	= Fermilab (DuPage Co.)
FGP	= Forest Glen F.P. (Vermilion Co.)
GLPSP	= Goose Lake Prairie S.P. (Grundy Co.)
GLNTC	= Great Lakes Naval Training Center (Lake Co.)
HL	= Horseshoe Lake (Madison Co.)
HLCA	= Horseshoe Lake C.A. (Alexander Co.)
IBSP	= Illinois Beach S.P. (Lake Co.)
JP	= Chicago's Jackson Park (Cook Co.)
KCP	= Kennekuk Cove Park (Vermilion Co.)
KFWA	= Kaskaskia F.W.A. (Moultrie Co.)
LCal	= Lake Calumet (Cook Co.)
LCNP	= La Salle County Nuclear Plant (La Salle Co.)
LRen	= Lake Renwick (Will Co.)
LRSHC	= Little Red School House N.C. (Cook Co.)
LVerm	= Lake Vermilion (Vermilion Co.)
M.Arb	= Morton Arboretum (Du Page Co.)
MFWA	= Middle Fork F.W.A. (Vermilion Co.)
MM	= McKee Marsh (Du Page Co.)
RLCA	= Rice Lake C.A. (Fulton Co.)
Rend	= Rend L (Jefferson and Franklin Co.s)
SLSP	= Sangchris Lake S.P. (Sangamon & Christian Co.)
Spfld	= Springfield (Sangamon Co.)
SLCA	= Spring Lake C.A. (Tazewell Co.)
SRSF	= Sand Ridge S.F. (Mason Co.)
SRSP	= Starved Rock S.P. (La Salle Co.)
UCCA	= Union County C.A. (Union Co.)
Wauk	= Waukegan (Lake Co.)

KEY TO WINTER FIELD NOTES

Species capitalized, boldfaced and underlined refer to occurrences of note for the winter season. In general, this would include any species recorded less than 10 times for the state during winter. Significant location(s), maximum count(s), and date(s) are boldfaced and underlined. A number in parentheses ( ) indicates the number of birds observed at a particular location or date. No number signifies single birds.

———Winter Season 1992/93———

PACIFIC LOON

LD: **20 Dec.**, Clin.L (*RC,*SB).

Common Loon

MC: 3,Clin.L, 20 Dec. (RP,m.ob.); 3, CONWR, 14 Jan. (BD, TF). LD: 10 Jan., LCNP (CW, JMc); 2 Jan., Braidwood (*JM); 27 Dec.(2), Clin.L (MD).

Pied-billed Grebe

MC: **22 wintered**, Spfld, (DB); 15, CONWR, 2 Jan. (BD); 8, Braidwood, 2 & 29 Jan. (JM). LD: 19 Dec.-31 Jan., Skokie (AS, m.ob.); 16 Jan., Collins L (Grundy Co.) (CA); 3 Dec., JP (HR); 20 Dec.(4), Clin.L (RC, SB); 19 Dec., Rockford (DW); 6 Dec., Wilmette (AS).

Horned Grebe

MC: 34, Bald.L., 8 Feb. (TF); 12, Clin.L, 5 Dec. (RP); 10, Clin.L, 20 Dec. (RC); 9, Spfld, 20 Dec. (DB-1 **wintered**); 8, CONWR, 2 Jan. (BD, KM-1 **wintered**); 7, Heidecke L (Grundy Co.), 11 Dec. (JM-1 **wintered**).

Eared Grebe

LD: 4 Dec.(2), Spfld (DB-1 **wintered**, 2nd year in a row, ph-DO); 8 Feb.(2), Bald.L (TF); 12 Dec., Clin.L (RC); 5-8 Dec., Spring L (Tazewell Co.) (LA, KR).

WESTERN GREBE

LD: **16-19 Dec.**, Evanston area (EW, JS, m.ob.); **13 Dec.**, Carl.L (KM). See Seasonal Highlights in Vol 2. No. 2 of Meadowlark.

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN

27 Feb. (ad.), LCal (JL). Two birds present earlier at Indiana lakefront locations.

Double-crested Cormorant

16 Dec., Wilmette (EW, AS); 19 Dec., Fox R (Kane Co.)(fide DK); **2 Jan.-24 Feb.** (3-7), Braidwood (JM); 10 Jan., LCNP (CW, JMc); **17 Jan.** (2), Spfld (DB). Wintered: 2, Carl.L (KM); **Danville** (SB); **Blue Island** (imm.) (*WM, CA).

Great Blue Heron

MC: 16, Will Co., 5 Feb. (JM-several wintered); 12, Lock & Dam 18 (Henderson Co.), 19 Dec. (LM); 10, LCNP, 2 Jan. (CW, JMc). Wintered: Spring L (Tazewell Co.) (LA, KR); Sangamon Co. (8-9) (DB-most ever for winter); 8, CONWR, 14 Jan. (KM-wintered); Blackhawk Springs F.P. (Winnebago Co.) (2) (ABr, DW). Others: 1, Green Oaks (Lake Co.), 11 Jan. (DJ).

Tundra Swan

MC: 10, LCal, 13 Dec. (MD, RP); 4, Cypress Creek NWR (Pulaski Co.), 7 Dec. (fide BD). LD: 6 Dec., Highland Park (DDn); 13 Dec.(imm.), GLNTC (ph-JN); 31 Dec.- 23 Jan. (ad.), Wolf L (Cook Co.)(WM, CA); 10 Jan. (ad.), Kishwaukee R (Winnebago Co.) (ABr); 10-17 Jan.(imm.), Blue Island (WM).

Black-crowned Night Heron, Theodore Marsh, Crest Hill, Will County, 22 December 1993. Present since 17 November and tallied on the Joliet Christmas Bird Count. Photo by Joe B. Milosevich.

Black-crowned Night-Heron

MC: 1-4 wintered, Blue Island (*WM). Others: Crest Hill, (ad.) 17 Nov.-22 Dec.& (imm.) 27 Jan. (*JM).

TRUMPETER SWAN

MC: 4 (2 ad. & 2 imm.), Spring L (Tazewell Co.), 30 Jan.- 4 Mar. (LA-1 ad. & 1 imm. banded in Wisconsin). Others: GLNTC (unbanded imm.), 26 Dec.- 1 Jan. (LB, ph-JN).

Mute Swan

MC: **52**, Wolf L (Cook Co.), 2 Jan. (WM); 6, Spring L (Tazewell Co.) (LA, MD, RP); 5, Chi (Montrose), 24 Jan. (EW); 4 down to 1, Spfld, 12 Dec.- 16 Jan. (DB); 3, Northbrook (Cook Co.), 26 Dec. (LB). Others: Lockport (imm.), 12 Dec.(JM); LRen (ad. & imm.), 28 Dec.- 22 Jan. (JM).

Greater White-fronted Goose

MC: **40**, UCCA, 1 Jan. (BD); 23, Rend, 12 Dec. (TF, JD). Others: RLCA (8), 15 Feb.(KR); UCCA (3), 24 Dec.(CW); Spfld (2), 2 & 3 Jan. (DB); Fermi, 19 Dec. (PK, DK); Rock Cut S.P., 26 Dec.- 2 Jan. (DW); Spoon L (Knox Co.), 27 Dec. (MB).

Snow Geese

MC: 7,300, Swan L (Mississippi R in Calhoun Co.), 10 Dec. (MGe); 1,000, Rend & 1,000, Bald L (Randolph Co.), 18 Dec. (MGe). Others: 250, Carl.L, 9 Feb.(KM); 5 white & 4 blue, Ogden (Champaign Co.), 10 Jan. (RC); 3, LCNP, 16 Jan. (LA); Heidecke L, 21 Dec. & 17 Feb. (blue) (JM); Rock Cut S.P., 2 Jan. (DW); Spfld, 1 blue wintered (DB).

Ross' Goose

UCCA (imm.), 23 Dec. (TF,*VK, m.ob.). See Seasonal Highlights in this issue.

BRANT

UCCA, 23 Dec. (*VK, m.ob.). See Seasonal Highlights in this issue.

Canada Goose

MC: 597,000, southern Illinois quota zone, 19 Jan. (RWh)- peak numbers.

Wood Duck

MC: 4, Chi, 4 Feb. (EW). Others: Sidney (Champaign Co.), 19 Dec.(RC, EC); CBG (male), 26 Dec. (LB); Rock River (pr.), 27 Dec.- 2 Jan. (DW); Spfld (2 males), wintered (DB).

Green-winged Teal

LD: 3 Jan., Champaign Co. (RC); 2 Jan. (6), LCNP (CW, JMe); 29 Dec., Spfld (DB); 26 Dec.(male), CBG (LB).

American Black Duck

MC: 4,585, Illinois river valley, 16 Dec. (MGe); 300-400, Heidecke L (Grundy Co.), 21 Dec.- 17 Feb.(JM); 37, Fermi, 19 Dec. (PK, DK).

Mallard

MC: 127,000, Illinois river valley, 8 Dec. (MGe); 10,500, LCNP, 5 Dec. (CW, JMe); 3,000, Braidwood, 2 Jan. (JM); 1200, Carl.L, 13 Dec. (KM); 735, Little Calumet R (Cook Co.), 26 Dec. (WM, SF, CA).

Northern Pintail

MC: 6,100, Mississippi river at Calhoun Co., 8 Dec. (MGe). Others: Heidecke L (Grundy Co.), 11 Dec. (JM); Spfld (4), 16 Jan.(DB); Clin.L (male), 20 Jan. (RC); Chi (male), 23 Jan. (EW).

Blue-winged Teal

LD: 19 Dec., Homer L (Champaign Co.) (RW, RC).

Northern Shoveler

MC: 50, HLCA, 21 Jan. (KM); 8, Spfld, 7 Dec. (DB). Others: 21 Jan., Wilmette (EW); 1 Jan. (male), Heidecke L (Grundy Co.) (JM); 26 Dec. (female), Northbrook (LB); 6 Dec., Chi (EW);

Gadwall

MC: 6,650, Mississippi river at Calhoun Co., 1 Dec. (MGe). Others: 130 wintered, Joliet, 20 Jan. (JM); 70, C'dale, 14 Jan. (KM); 65 wintered, Heidecke L (Grundy Co.), 3 Jan. (JM); 42 wintered, Spfld, 27 Dec. (DB); 28, Cook Co., 20 Dec. (WS); 17, Spoon L (Knox Co.), 3 Jan. (MB); Clin.L, 20 Dec. (RC); Chi (imm. male), 23 Jan. (EW).

EURASIAN WIGEON

Clin.L, 20 Dec. (*RC).

American Wigeon

MC: 500, lower Illinois river valley, 16 Dec. (MGe). Others: 50, Carl.L, 13 Dec. (KM); 26, Clin.L, 20 Dec. (RC, SB); 18, Braidwood, 29 Jan. (JM); 8, Chi, 4 Feb. (EW); 5, Spfld, wintered (DB); 5 wintered, IBSP, (JN, LB); DPCA, 2 Jan. (JM); Wolf L (Cook Co.), 24 Jan. (WM).

Canvasback

MC: 17,000, Nauvoo-Mississippi river at Hancock Co., 8 Dec. (MGe). Others: 100-200, Jersey & Madison Co.'s, 22 Jan.-22 Feb. (KM); 20, Lock & Dam 18, 19 Dec. (LM); 3-4 wintered, Spfld (DB); 2 females, Joliet, 20 Jan.- 1 Feb. (JM); CBG, 1 Dec. (LB); Wauk (male), 31 Dec.- 28 Feb.+ (AS, JN, LB); LCal, 9 & 19 Jan. (JL, EW).

Redhead

MC: 400, Nauvoo-Mississippi river at Hancock Co., 8 Dec. (MGe). Others: Wolf L (Cook Co.) (2 males), 2-24 Jan. (GW, WM); Rend (3), 3 Jan. (JD); Joliet (2 males, 1 female), 20 Jan.- 28 Feb. (JM).

Ring-necked Duck

MC: 11,200, Nauvoo-Mississippi river at Hancock Co., 16 Dec. (MGe). Others: Joliet (3-8), 3 Dec.- 28 Feb. (JM); Rockford (2 males-1 wintered), 19 Dec.(DW); Little Calumet R (Cook Co.)(1-4), 12 Dec.-21 Feb. (WM); Northbrook (3), 17 Dec.(LB); Lock & Dam 18 (4), 19 Dec. (LM); Evanston (2 males), 4 Jan. (EW); Spfld (pr. wintered) (DB).

Greater Scaup

MC: 820, JP, 7 Dec. (HR); 600, Glencoe, 6 Dec. (PF); 123, Rend, 16 Jan. (TF, JD). Others: Joliet (6), 4 Dec.- 28 Feb. (JM); Spring L (Tazewell Co.) (2), 5 Dec. (LA); Quiver L (Mason Co.)(2), 26 Dec.(MD); Spfld (6), 12 Dec. (DB-wintered).

Lesser Scaup

MC: 1,000, Evanston, 7 Dec. (EW). Others: 80, HLCA, 4 Feb. (KM); 69-90, Joliet, all winter (JM); 16, Spfld, 20 Dec. (DB).

Oldsquaw

Spfld (male), 1-10 Dec. (DB); Clin.L (female), 12 Dec. (RC); Joliet, 16 Dec.-11 Feb. (*JM, CA); **CONWR** (1-2), 2-31 Jan. (BD, TF, JD, DK).

Oldsquaw, Brandon Road Lock and Dam, Joliet, Will County, 17 December 1992. Photo by Joe B. Milosevich.

Surf Scoter

MC: 2, Spfld, 27 Dec.- 6 Jan. (DB). Others: n. Cook Co., 6 Dec. (AS, JS); **HLCA**, 10 Jan. (*DMi, DFl); Joliet, 3 Feb. (CA).

White-winged Scoter

Wilmette, 16 Dec. (fide EW).

Common Goldeneye

MC: 20,620, lower Illinois river valley, 5 Jan. (MGe). Others: 1,000, Heidecke L (Grundy Co.), 21 Dec. (JM); 810, Evanston, 23 Dec.(EW); 400, L Ren, 2 Dec. (JM); 400, Spfld, 27 Dec.- 6 Jan. (DB).

Bufflehead

MC: 22, JP, 5 Jan. (HR); 8-21, Joliet, 3 Dec.- 28 Feb.(JM); 20, Highland Park (Cook Co.), 20 Dec. (PF); 19, Evanston, 23 Dec. (EW); 16, Wauk , 1 Feb. (DJ); 10, Spfld, 27 Dec. (DB); 5, CONWR, 14 Jan. (KM).

Hooded Merganser

MC: 900, LChau, 5 Jan. (MGe). Others: 140, Carl.L, 13 Dec. (KM); 83, Grundy/Will Co., 2 Dec. (JM); 65, Spfld, 12 Dec. (DB); 6, Clin.L, 20 Feb. (RP); 5, Wauk, 1 Jan. (JN); 3, LCNP 3 Jan. (CW, JMc); JP, 1 Jan. (EW).

Common Merganser

MC: 16,935, lower Illinois river valley, 5 Jan. (MGe); 10,000, LCNP, 10 Jan. (CW, JMc). Others: 3,000, LChau, 30 Jan. (RP); 1,000-2,000, Heidecke L (Grundy Co.), 11 Dec.- 3 Feb. (JM); 2,000, Chi, 30 Jan. (JL); 1,000, Clin.L, 30 Jan. (RC); 300, Saganashkee Slough (Cook Co.), 10 Feb. (WS); 290, Carl.L, 30 Jan. (KM); 265, Braidwood, 19 Jan. (EW);

Red-breasted Merganser

MC: 3,000, Chi, 1 Dec. (AW). Others: 30, JP, 19 Dec. (HR); 3-20, Heidecke L (Grundy Co.), 11 Dec.- 3 Feb. (JM); 6, Carl.L, 20 Dec. (KM); 2 or 3, Spfld, all winter (DB); 2 males, Lock & Dam 18 (Henderson Co.), 19 Dec. (LM); LChau, 23 Jan. (LA).

Ruddy Duck

MC: 15, HLCA, 21 Jan. & some all winter (KM); 2-5, Joliet, all winter (JM). Others: Evanston, 5-7 Dec. (EW); Spfld, 17 Dec. (DB-none wintered).

Northern Harrier

MC: **64**, Pulaski Co., 10 Jan. (TF, JD); **22**, Knox Co., 23 Jan. (MB); 16, Logan (Franklin Co.), 13 Jan. (LSt); 15, Clinton Co., 19 Jan. (RC); **9**, Winnebago Co., 19 Dec. (DW, m.ob.). Others: Fermi (wintered) (m.ob.).

Sharp-shinned Hawk

MC: 5, Du Page Co., 19-20 Dec. (EW, PK, DK); 3 wintered, Rockford (DW). Others: 9 in Jan., Spfld (DB); Mason Co. (ad.), 12 Dec. (KR); Knox Co., 13 Dec.- 31 Jan. (MB); Champaign Co. (mostly imm.), Dec.- Feb. (RC).

Cooper's Hawk

MC: 5, Du Page Co., 19-20 Dec. (PK, DK, EW); 3 (ad.), Winnebago Co., 19 Dec. (DW). Others: 7 dates in Dec.& Jan., Spfld (DB); Winnebago Co. (2), 19 Dec. (DW); JP, 1 Jan.-3 Feb. (KC); n.e. Lake Co. (ad.), 1 Jan.-5 Feb. (JN); 1 (ad.) Gurnee (Lake Co.), 6 Jan. (DJ); LCal (imm.), 2 Jan. (WM); Clin.L, 16 Jan. (RC, MD); Urbana, 30 Jan. (RC).

Red-tailed Hawk

MC: 63, Winnebago Co., 19 Dec. (DW, m.ob.); 14, De Witt Co., 5 Dec. (RP); 13, M.Arb, 20 Dec. (TK, EW); 10, Sangamon Co., 8 Jan. (DB).

Northern Goshawk

Du Page Co. (ad.), 13 Dec. (AW); Sangamon Co. (imm.), 14 Dec. (DB); Henderson Co. (imm.), 19 Dec. (MB); Rock (ad.), 26 Dec. (DW); n. Cook Co. (imm.), 27 Dec. (AS); Saline Co. (ad.), 1 Jan. (JDe); Gurnee, Lake Co.. (ad.) 1-8 Jan. (DJ, et al.); Sangamon Co.., (imm.) 9 Jan. (MD); ; Clin.L (imm.), 16 Jan. (RC, MD); Peoria Co. (imm.), 20 Jan. (LA); Champaign (imm.), 22 Jan. (RC); Lincolnwood (Cook Co.), 24 Jan. (DBr); Sangamon Co. (ad.), 28 Jan. (DB); Mason Co. (ad.), 30 Jan. (RP, MD); Buckhart (imm.), 1 Feb. (DB); Carl.L (ad), 6 Feb. (RP, MD); Urbana (imm.), 6 Feb. (RC).

Red-shouldered Hawk

Sangamon Co. (ad), 16 Dec. (DB); Henderson Co., 19 Dec. (MB); Winnebago Co. (2), 19 Dec. (DW); Joliet, 19 Dec. (CA); s. Cook Co., 27 Jan. (WS); Sangamon Co. (imm.), 8 Feb. (DB); Vermilion Co., 14 Feb. (JS); Champaign Co. (imm.), 14 Feb. (RC).

Rough-legged Hawk

MC: 8, Techny (Cook Co.), 23 Jan. (DBr, EW, GR); 7, La Salle Co., 28 Feb. (CW, JMc); 5, Henderson Co., 9 Jan. (MB); 4, Knox Co., 7 Feb. (MB); 4, Winnebago Co., 19 Dec. (DW); 3, Fermi, 10-24 Jan. (PK, m.ob); 3, Kendall Co., 24 Feb. (DS); 2, Oregon, 13 Feb. (EW); 2, IBSP, 24 Jan. (JN, AS); 2, LCal, 17 Feb. (JL); Sangamon Co., 30 Jan. (DB).

Bald Eagle

Statewide Midwinter Survey: 1,156 (69.0% ad. & 25.3% imm.) (fide VK).

Immature Bald Eagles, Illinois River adjacent to Heidecke Lake, Grundy County, 1 January 1993. Photo by Joe B. Milosevich.

Golden Eagle

CONWR (ad.), mid-Jan. (TF, JD, DK); UCCA (ad.), 14 Jan. (BD).

American Kestrel

MC: 46, Winnebago Co., 19 Dec. (DW, m.ob.); 12, Fermi, 19 Dec. (PK, DK); 10, Sangamon Co., 8 Jan. (DB-good numbers).

Merlin

Evanston (ad. male), 3 Dec. (JKo); Decatur (injured bird), 22 Dec. (MA); Chi (Montrose) (ad. male), 23 Dec. (RH); Johnson Co. (ad. male), 8 Jan. (TF); Sangamon Co. (female), 2 Feb. (DB).

Prairie Falcon

McLean Co., 9 Jan. (RC); **La Salle Co.** (imm.), 20-21 Dec. (CW, JMc); **Shelby Co.** (imm.), 6 Feb. (MD, *RP); **La Salle Co.** (ad.), 28 Feb. (CW, JMc).

Peregrine Falcon

Vermilion Co., 26 Dec. (JS); JP, 25 Jan. (HR).

Virginia Rail

MC: **4**, IBSP, 1 Jan. (JN, JSo-videotaped); **2-3 wintered**, Crest Hill (Will Co.) (*JM).

Ring-necked Pheasant

MC: 29, Fermi, 19 Dec. (PK, DK); 24, Clin.L, 27 Feb. (RP); 8, Sangamon Co., 7 Dec. (DB). Scarce.

Greater Prairie-Chicken

Marion Co. Sanctuary (9), 27 Feb. (MSe)

Wild Turkey

MC: 45, Winnebago Co., 19 Dec. (DW, m.ob.). Others: 3, Wheaton (Du Page Co.), 19 Dec. (EW).

Northern Bobwhite

MC: 10, Spfld, 8 Dec. (DB); 5, Bond Co., 28 Feb. (KM); 5, Fermi, 19 Dec. (PK, DK); 4, DPCA, 22 Feb. (JM).

American Coot

MC: 200, Rend, 12 Dec. (JD); 200, Madison Co., 21 Jan. (KM); **94**, Braidwood, 2 Jan. (JM). Others: 15, Spfld, wintered (DB); s. Cook Co., 1-10 Jan. (WM); Rockford, wintered (DW).

Killdeer

LD: 5-23 Dec.(3), Joliet (CA, JM); 19 Dec., Wheaton (Du Page Co.)(m.ob.).

DUNLIN

13-14 Feb., GLNTC (JN—photo).

Common Snipe

MC: **18**, UCCA, 3 Jan. (JD); 8, Winnebago Co., 19 Dec. (DW). Others: Will Co., 20 Dec. (AW); Clin.L, 20 Dec. (RP, MD); Glenview (Cook Co.), 26 Dec. (LB).

American Woodcock

LD: **22 Dec.**, Alexander Co. (*SB).

Virginia Rail, Theodore Marsh, Crest Hill, Will County, 15 February 1993. One of three wintering birds which were tallied on Joliet Illinois Christmas Bird Count. Photo by Joe B. Milosevich.

Little Gull

Spfld (ad.), thru 20 Dec. (DB).

Bonaparte's Gull

MC: 230, LCal, 5 Dec. (JL); 40, Evanston, 23 Dec. (EW). Others: 8, Heidiecke L, 2 Dec. (JM); 2, Spfld, 21 Jan. (DB); 1 wintered, CONWR (KM).

Ring-billed Gull

MC: **11,300**, Carl.L, 20 Dec. (KM); 3,000, Spfld, several dates (DB); 2,000 wintered, LCal (JL); 1,255, Chi, 23 Jan. (EW); 528, Lock & Dam 18 (Henderson Co.), 19 Dec. (LM).

MEW GULL

Joliet (Will Co.), 3 Dec. (*JM), first county record; **Wauk**, 20-25 Jan. (AS, *DD, ph.-JN, video-DJ) first county record;

Adult Mew Gull, front center. Brandon Road Lock and Dam, Joliet, Will Co., 3 Dec. 1992. Note dark mantle, small size, dark eye, and unmarked bill. Photo by Joe B. Milosevich.

Chi(Montrose), 22 Feb. (RH, m.ob.); Chi (Montrose) (different bird), 25 Feb. (RH). All were in ad. winter plumage. See Seasonal Highlights in this issue.

CALIFORNIA GULL

Clin.L (ad.), 12 Dec. (RC); **Tazewell Co.** (ad.), 25-27 Feb. (KR).

Herring Gull

MC: 4,000, LCal, 26 Dec. (WM); 2,000, Heidieeke L, 21 Dec. (JM); 300, Spfld, 19 Jan. (DB).

Thayer's Gull

MC: 18 total on 9 different dates, LCal (JL); 4 (3 ad., 1st winter), Tazewell Co., 28 Feb. (KR). Others: LCal (3), 4 Dec. (EW); Chi (ad.), 13 & 25 Dec. (AS); s.e. Du Page Co., (2nd winter), 19 Dec. (WM); Wheaton (Du Page Co.) (1st winter), 19 Dec. (EW); s.e. Du Page Co. (ad.), 20 Dec. (WM); Clin.L (imm.), 20 Dec. (RC, SB); Spfld (ad.), 10 Jan. (DB); Peoria Co. (ad), 23 Jan. (LA); Clin.L (ad.), 30 Jan. (RC); LCNP (3), 21 Feb. (CW, JMc).

Iceland Gull

Chi (ad.), 6 Dec. (AS); Cook Co. (1st winter), 12 Dec. (AS); LCal (3rd winter Kumlien's), 9 Jan. (WM, JL); **Rend** (1st winter), 16 Jan. (TF, BD); Lake Co. (1st winter Kumlien's), 23 Jan. (AS, JN); Wilmette (2nd winter), 31 Jan. (EW); LCal (ad.), 13 Feb. (JL); Lake Co. (1st winter), 14 Feb. (AS).

GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL

O'Brien Lock & Dam, Calumet River (Cook Co.), (2nd winter), 27 Nov.-12 Dec. (LA, ASi, AS, *m.ob. —video/ph.-m.ob.); Macon Co. (3rd winter), 19-20 Feb. (*RP/ph., *MD); Peoria Co. (3rd winter), 27-28 Feb. (*LA). First confirmed state record(s) pending IORC approval.

Glaucous Gull

MC: 5, Tazewell Co., 27-28 Feb. (KR). Others: Evanston (1st winter), 5 Dec. (EW); Chi (ad., 1st winter), 12 Dec. (AS); Dolton (ad.), 12 Dec. (AW); Lake Co. (2nd winter), 13 Dec. & 14 Feb. (JN, AS); LCNP, 20 Dec. (CW, JMe); Chi (1st winter), 25 Dec. (AS); LCal (1st winter), 24-26 Dec. (WM); LCal (ad., 1st winter), 2 Jan. (WM); Heideeke L (ad), 1-2 Jan. (JM); **Rend** (1st winter), 12 Jan. (TF); Spfld (2nd/3rd winter plumage), 22 Jan. (DB); Tazewell Co. (ad.), 2 Feb. (LA); Tazewell Co. (2-1st winters), 20 Feb. (KR).

Great Black-backed Gull

Joliet (subad.), 3 Dec. (JM); Peoria Co. (ad.), 3 Jan. (LA); Spfld (ad.), 16 Jan. (DB); LCal (1st winter), 19 Jan. (EW); Wilmette (ad.), 30 Jan. (JA et al); Lake Co. (1st winter), 6 Feb. (AS); Tazewell Co. (ad.), 20-27 Feb. (KR, LA).

Lesser Black-backed Gull

LCal & vicinity (2 ad.), 3-10 Dec., but one present thru 19 Jan. there (m.ob.); Heideeke L (ad.), 11 Dec. (JM); Chi

(Montrose) (3rd winter), 13 Dec.-3 Feb+. (AS, RH); LCNP, 20 Dec. (CW, JMc); Spfld (subad.), 27 Dec.- 7 Feb. (DB); Whiteside Co., 28 Dec. (CW); Peoria Co. (ad.), 22 Jan. (LA); Madison Co., 8 Feb. (JD, TF); Lake Co. (ad), 13 Feb. (ph-JN); Macon Co. (1st winter), 22 Feb. (MD); Peoria Co. (2 ad.), 27-28 Feb. (LA); Tazewell Co. (2 ad.), 28 Feb. (KR).

Mourning Dove

MC: 110, Sangamon Co., 3 Dec. (DB); 107, Fermi, 19 Dec. (PK, DK); 105, Alsip (Cook Co.), 29 Dec. (SF); 50, Knox Co., 31 Dec. (MB); 27, JP, 1 Dec. (HR).

Black-legged Kittiwake

Spfld (imm.), **27 Dec.- 4 Feb.** (DB).

Snowy Owl

MC: **6** (3 ad.), Chi (5 at Miegs Airport & 1 at Montrose), 31 Jan. (EW, AS); 5 at Miegs Airport on 23-30 Jan. and 1-7 Feb.; and only 2 earlier on 25 Dec. Others: **La Salle Co.** (male), 29 & 31 Dec. (VK, CW, JMc); JP, 4-9 Feb. (fide KC).

Juvenile Black-legged Kittiwake, Navy Pier, Chicago, 23 November 1992. Photo by Robert Hughes.

Lesser Black-backed Gull, Montrose Beach, Chicago, 12 December 1992. Photo by Robert Hughes.

Subadult Great Black-backed Gull, Brandon Road Lock and Dam, Joliet, Will County, 3 December 1992. Photo by Joe B. Milosevich.

Snowy Owl, Montrose Beach, Chicago, 16 January 1993. Photo by Robert Hughes.

Red-bellied Woodpecker

MC: 16, Sangamon Co., 1 Jan. (DB); 9, M.Arb, 20 Dec. (TK, EW).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

MC: 4, Pine Hills (Union Co.), 31 Jan. (BD); 2, Winnebago Co., 19 Dec. (DW); 2, Sangamon Co., 13 Jan. (DB). Others: **Chi**, 19 Dec.- 1 Jan. (EW, m.ob.); La Salle Co., 14 Jan. (DS); Mason Co., 16-30 Jan. (LA).

Downy Woodpecker

MC: 49, Fox River valley (Kane Co..), 19 Dec. (m.ob.); 15, Sangamon Co., 20 Dec. (DB).

Northern Flicker

MC: **28**, Winnebago Co., 19 Dec. (DW, m.ob.); **22**, Fermi, 19 Dec. (PK, DK); 11, s.w. Cook Co., 13 Dec. (WS); 8, DeWitt Co., 5 Dec. (RP); 8, Winnebago

Eastern Screech Owl

MC: 9, Sangamon Co., 20 Dec. (DB).

Great Horned Owl

"Pale arctic form": 20 & 27 Dec., **Chi (Montrose Cemetary)** (JLi, WK & DBr).

Barred Owl

MC: 4, Sangamon Co., 20 Dec. (DB).

Northern Saw-whet Owl

Piatt Co., 12 Dec.- 22 Jan. (RC); Rock Cut S.P. (Winnebago Co.), 12-18 Dec. (DW); S. Dells (Winnebago Co.), 2 Jan.- 28 Feb. (DW); **Johnson Co.**, 8 Jan. (JD); **Carl.L**, 10 Feb.- 28 Feb. (MSc).

Long-eared Owl

MC: 10, s.w. Cook Co., 7 Feb. (WS); 7, Fermi, 5 Feb. (RCo. et al); 2, s.e. Du Page Co., 3 Dec. (AW); 2, MM, 19 Dec. (EW); 2, Johnson Co., 20 Jan. (JD). Others: Mason Co., 17 Jan. (MD, LA); Champaign Co., 23 Jan. (RC).

Belted Kingfisher

MC: 11 wintered, Will Co. (7 locales)(JM); 8, Fox River (Kane Co.), 19 Dec. (m.ob.); 5, Sangamon Co., 20 Dec. (DB); 3, Knox Co., wintered (MB); 3, LCal, 26 Dec. (WM).

Red-headed Woodpecker

MC: **23**, Winnebago Co., 2 Jan. (DW, m.ob.); 10, Sangamon Co., 31 Dec. (DB).

Long-eared Owl, Little Pine Grove, Orland Park, Cook County, 28 February 1993. Photo by Kanae Hirabayashi.

Co., 30 Jan. (DW); 3, Will Co., 23 Dec. (JM); 19 Dec.- 4 Feb+, Chi (EW, KH).

Pileated Woodpecker

Grundy Co., 20 Dec. (CW); Ryerson C.A., 22 Dec. (fide RB).

Eastern Phoebe

Pope Co., 8 Jan. (TF, JD).

Horned Lark

MC: 1,300, Sangamon Co., 10 Jan. (DB).

TREE SWALLOW

Rend, 16 Dec. (JD); St. Clair Co., 20 Dec. (KM); St. Clair Co. (2), 15 Jan. (*JV). Including these records there are only 7 published winter records for the state.

Short-eared Owl

MC: 14, Logan (Franklin Co.), 13 Jan. (LSt); 8, Knox Co., 6 Feb. (MB); 6, Carl. L, 6 Feb. (RP); 3, Franklin Co., 16 Jan. (TF, JD); 2, La Salle Co., 29 Dec. (CW, JM); 2, Knox Co., 10 Jan. (LA). Others: Chi, 1 Dec. (RH); Urbana, 19 Dec. (EC); Lee Co., 1 Jan. (CW); Piatt Co., 17 Jan. (RC); Champaign Co., 22 Jan. (RS); Piatt Co., 20 Feb. (RC).

Blue Jay

MC: 40, Sangamon Co., 20 Dec. (DB); 21, Carl.L, 30 Jan. (KM).

American Crow

MC: 425, St. Clair Co., 17 Feb. (KM); 100, Sangamon Co., 2 Feb. (DB).

Black-capped Chickadee

MC: 165, M.Arb, 20 Dec. (TK, EW); 32, De Witt Co., 5 Dec. (RP).

Tufted Titmouse

MC: 20, Sangamon Co., 13 Jan. (DB); 13, Carl.L, 28 Feb. (KM).

Red-breasted Nuthatch

MC: 12, M.Arb, 20 Dec. (TK, EW); 5, Winnebago Co., 19 Dec. (DW); 5, Mason Co., 11 Dec. (KR); 4, Winnebago Co., 26 Dec. (DW); 2-3, Mason, all winter (LA); CONWR, 14 Dec. (KM). Scarce.

White-breasted Nuthatch

MC: 17, M.Arb, 20 Dec. (TK, EW); 6, Sangamon Co., 20 Dec. (DB).

Brown Creeper

MC: 46, Winnebago Co., 19 Dec. (DW, m.ob.); 10, M.Arb, 20 Dec. (TK, EW); 8, Sangamon Co., 18 Dec. (DB).

ROCK WREN

CONWR, (Williamson Co.) 14 Jan.- 28 Feb.+ (*BD, m.ob.- ph.—TF). First confirmed county record. See Seasonal Highlights in this issue.

Carolina Wren

MC: 9, Sangamon Co., 20 Dec & 28 Jan. (DB); 8 wintered, Vermilion Co. (JS); 6 wintercd, Will Co. (JM); 5, Palos, 20 Dec. (GW, JO, WS); 4, GLNTC, 1 Jan. (JN).

House Wren

Spfld, 16 Dec. (DB); Horseshoc L (Alexander Co.), 22 Dec. (*VK).

Winter Wren

MC: 3, Palos, 20 Dec. (GW, JO, WS). Others: 2, M.Arb, 19 Dec. (fide EW); De Kalb Co., 24 Dec. (DS); n.e. Cook Co., 27 Dec. (LB); GLNTC, 1 Jan. (LB); Winnebago Co., 2 Jan. (DW); Highland Park, 5 Jan. (PF); Vermilion Co., 20 Jan. (JS); Chi (bird sanctuary), 23

Short-eared Owl, southeast of Lincoln Park Bird Sanctuary, Chicago, 28 March 1993. Photo by Kanae Hirabayashi.

Jan. (m.ob.); De Witt Co., 20 Feb. (RP); La Salle Co., 27 Feb. (CW, JMe).

Golden-crowned Kinglet

MC: 42, Winnebago Co., 19 Dec. (DW); 12, CONWR, 14 Jan. (KM); 10, Mason, 3 Jan. (LA); 9, M.Arb, 20 Dec. (TK, EW); 7, Sangamon Co.., 4 & 18 Dec. (DB).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet

Wheaton (Du Page Co..), 19 Dec. (EW); Skokie Lagoons, Cook Co., 26 Dec.-2 Jan. (AS, et al.); 6 (wintered), Sangamon Co. (DB).

Marsh Wren

Spfld **(wintered)** (DB); Sang.L, 12 Dec. (DB); Rend, 16-19 Dec. (JD, TF); Will Co., **17 Dec.** (JM).

Eastern Bluebird

MC: 8, Knox Co., all winter (MB); Others: **M.Arb**, **(2) 25 Jan.-2 Feb**. (m.ob.).

SWAINSON'S THRUSH

Skokie Lagoons, Cook Co.., 26 Dec.-1Jan. (*DWa, WJ, *LB, *EW, et al., *DJ-ph.). See Seasonal Highlights in this issue.

Marsh Wren, Theodore Marsh, Crest Hill, Will County, 17 December 1992. Tallied during Joliet Christmas Bird Count. Photo by Joe B. Milosevich.

Hermit Thrush

Mason Co., 26 Dec. (MD); Vermilion Co., 2 Jan. (DW); Highland Park, 11 Jan. (PF); De Witt Co., 16 Jan. (RC); Mason S.F. (2), 16 Jan. (LA); Du Page Co., wintered (BF).

American Robin

MC: 300, Mason S.F., 30 Jan. (LA); 285, Glenview, 22 Jan. (EW). Others: small #'s wintered in Winnebago Co. (AB), Will Co. (JM), Evanston (EW) and Carl.L (KM).

Mockingbird

MC: 5 wintered, Sangamon Co. (DB). Others: La Salle Co., 20 Dec. (DS); Vermilion Co., 1 Jan. (RC, EC); DPCA, 2 Jan. (JM); Knox Co., 16 Jan. (MB); Tazewell Co., 16 Jan. (LA).

Brown Thrasher

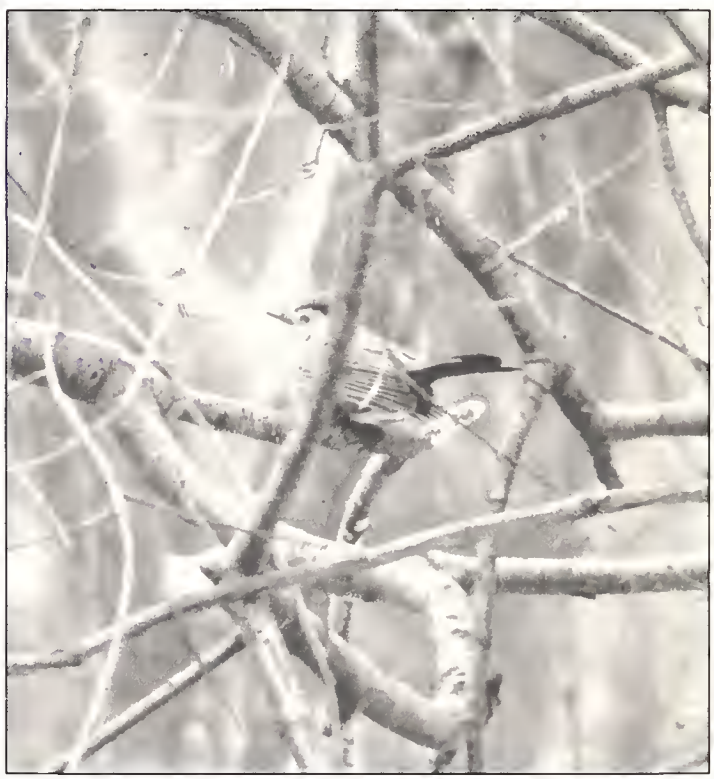
M.Arb, 20 Dec. (EW); Winnebago Co. (2), 6 Jan. (ABr); HLCA, 9 Jan. (JD, TF); Sangamon Co., 11 Jan. (DB); Clin.L (wintered), 6 Feb. (RP).

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER

Rend (Jefferson Co.), 16 Dec.-24 Jan. (*TF, *JD, m.ob.). First state record. See separate story in this issue.

Gray Catbird

Knox Co., 8 Dec. (MB); Alsip (Cook Co.), 17 Dec.- 15 Jan. (SF); Joliet, 14-15 Jan. (RRe, JM-photo).



Gray Catbird, Joliet, Will County, 15 January 1993. Photo by Joe B. Milosevich.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING

Winnebago Co., 20 Feb. (ABr). First record in 30 years for Winnebago Co. See Seasonal Highlights in this issue.

Cedar Waxwing

MC: 160, near MM, 19 Dec. (fide EW). Others: 40, Sangamon Co., 8 Dec. (DB); 25, Vermilion Co., 1 Jan. (RC, et al.).

Northern Shrike

Mason Co., 12 Dec. (KR); Winnebago Co., 7-19 Dec. (DW); IBSP, 23-24 Jan. & 6 Feb. (AS, JN); De Witt Co., 27-28 Jan. (MD, RP, RC); Macon Co., 3-4 Feb. (MD, RP); Winnebago Co., 25 Feb. (ABr, DW); Fermi (19 Dec.-Feb+.) (m.ob.).

Loggerhead Shrike

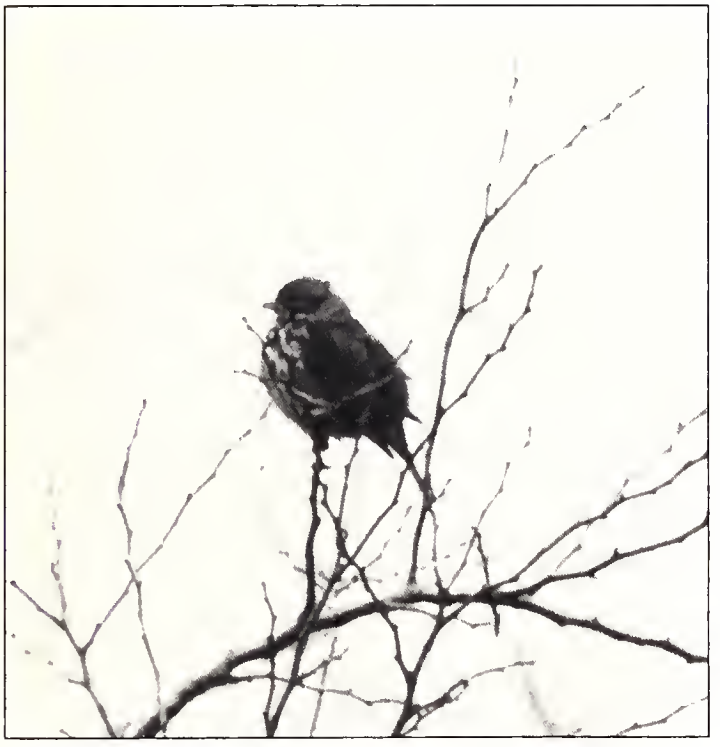
MC: 5, Carl.L, 28 Feb. (KM).

European Starling

MC: 1,700, Glenview, 22 Jan. (EW)

SOLITARY VIREO

Spfld, 10-11 Dec. (DB). First December record ever for the state. However, this record might be considered a straggling fall migrant. See Seasonal Highlights in this issue.



Fox Sparrow, Braidwood, Will County, 2 January 1993. Photo by Joe B. Milosevich.

Orange-crowned Warbler

Spfld (imm.), 10 & 14 Dec. (DB).

NASHVILLE WARBLER

Fermi (ad. male), 6 Dec. (PK, DK).

NORTHERN PARULA WARBLER

Vermilion Co., 1 Jan. (*MD, RP-ph.). Second winter record. See Seasonal Highlights in this issue.

Yellow-rumped Warbler

MC: 9 wintered, Winnebago Co. (ABr); 9, Wheaton (Du Page Co.), 25 Dec. (EW); 4, De Kalb Co., wintered (DS); 2-3, Knox Co., all winter (MB).

Pine Warbler

CONWR, 3 Jan. (TF); C'dale, 19 Jan. (JHy); Johnson Co., 21 Feb. (TF).

Northern Cardinal

MC: 75, Clinton Co., 6 Feb. (RP).

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK

late Nov.- 22 Jan. (imm. male), Glenview (PF, LS-videotaped, *DJ); 6-24 Feb. (imm. male), La Salle Co. (CW).

DICKCISSEL

Sangamon Co., **14 Dec.** (DB); Menard Co., **30 Jan.- Feb+** (*VK - at feeder).

Rufous-sided Towhee

Evanston, 26 Dec. (fide EW - at feeder).

American Tree Sparrow

MC: 200, Will Co., 24 Feb. (JM); 200, LCal, 26 Dec. (WM, LS, CA); 100, Vermilion Co., winter (JS); 100, Sangamon Co., 15 Jan. (DB).

Chipping Sparrow

Winnebago Co., 27 Dec. (*DW). This is an unusual record and one of approximately (not including CBC records) 12 winter records for the state. This species must always be documented during the winter period.

Field Sparrow

Will Co., 19 Dec (JM); Vermilion Co., 1 Jan. (RC); Spfld (2), 6 Jan. (DB); Mason Co. (2), 17 Jan. (MD); Fermi, 5 Feb. (RCo.); M.Arb (2), 13 Feb. (DRi).

Fox Sparrow

M.C: 4, Spfld, 6 Jan. (DB). Others: 18-19 Dec., Joliet (JM); 26 Dec., Glenview (LB); 2 Jan., Will Co. (JM); 13 Jan., Peoria Co. (LA); wintered, M.Arb (EW).

Le Conte's Sparrow

Jackson Co., 30 Jan. (BD).

Savannah Sparrow

MC: 20, Jackson Co., 24-30 Jan. (BD). Others: Pulaski Co. (2), 14 Jan. (TF, JD); Macon Co., 16 Jan. (MD); Knox Co., 16 Jan. (MB); Sang.L, wintered (DB).

Song Sparrow

MC: 28, Carl.L, 28 Feb. (KM); 22, MM, 19 Dec. (EW); 16, Sangamon Co., 20 Dec. (DB); 5, Will Co., 20 Jan. (JM).

Swamp Sparrow

MC: 9, MM, 19 Dec. (EW); 5, De Kalb Co., 9 Jan. (DS).

Vesper Sparrow

Macon Co., 16 Jan. (MD); **GLPSP**, 16 Jan. (CA).

White-throated Sparrow

MC: 28, Dc Kalb Co., 9 Jan. (DS); 11, Sangamon Co., 14 Dec. (DB); 11, MM, 19 Dec. (EW).

White-crowned Sparrow

MC: 70, Urbana, 19 Dec. (RC); 20, GLPSP, 8 Jan. (JM); 16, Sangamon Co., 9 Dec. (DB); 12, Knox Co., 7 Feb. (MB); 7, Fermi, 19 Dec. (PK, DK).

Harris' Sparrow

Clinton Co. (imm.), 27 Dec.- 28 Feb.+ (MSe); **De Witt Co.** (imm.), 20 Feb. (MD).

Dark-eyed Junco

MC: 125, M.Arb, 20 Dec. (TK, EW). "Oregon form": 2, Spfld, 6 & 16 Dec. (DB); 2, Joliet, 18-19 Dec. (JM); Vermilion Co., 1 Jan. (MD).

Lapland Longspur

MC: 700, Sangamon Co., 10 Jan. (DB); 300, Champaign Co., 10 Jan. (RC); 100, Knox Co., 10 Jan. (LA).

Snow Bunting

MC: 100, De Kalb Co., 16 Jan. (DS); 30, LCNP, 16 & 23 Jan. (LA). Others: 15, Braidwood, 29 Jan. (JM); 2, Champaign Co., 10 Jan. (RC); 2, Chi, 23 Jan. (EW); Knox Co., 17 Jan. (MB).

Red-winged Blackbird

MC: 7,000 to **17,000**, 29 Dec.-28 Feb. (WM); 4,000, St Clair Co., 26 Jan. (KM); 700, Spfld, 9 Jan. (DB).

Eastern Meadowlark

MC: 60, Rend, 20 Dec. (KM); 11, De Kalb Co., 16 Jan. (DS).

Western Meadowlark

Knox Co., 31 Dec. & 17 Jan. (MB).

Rusty Blackbird

MC: 10, Sangamon Co., 20 Dec. & 2 Jan. (DB); 8, La Salle Co., 8 Feb. (CW).

Brewer's Blackbird

Will Co. (2), **14 Feb.** (JM).

Common Grackle

MC: 1,400, Spfld, 9 Jan. (DB); 600, Washington Co., 10 Feb. (KM); 300, Will Co., 16 Dec. (JM).

Brown-headed Cowbird

MC: 4,000, LCal, 28 Feb. (WM); 300, Urbana, 19 Dec.- 3 Jan. (RC); 300, Spfld, 20 Dec. (DB).

Purple Finch

MC: 30, Johnson Co., 30 Jan. (TF); 13 wintered, De Witt Co. (MD); 7, Sangamon Co., Jan. (DB); 5, Winnebago Co., 19 Dec. (DW); 4, Fulton Co., 9 Jan. (KR); 4, CBG, 22 Dec. (LB).

House Finch

MC: **567**, Winnebago Co., 19 Dec. (DW et al.); 105, Evanston, 26 Dec. (EW, m.ob.); 100, Clin.L, 6 Feb. (MD).

Red Crossbill

SRSF (30), 5 Dec.- 28 Feb.+ (LA); M.Arb (3), 5 Dec. (WS).

White-winged Crossbill

MC: 21, M.Arb, 3 Dec. (RCo et al.) - 7 there on 11 Dec., SRSF, 11 Dec. (KR).

Common Redpoll

Medinah (Du Page Co.), 31 Jan.- 5 Feb. (PCa) - at feeder.

Pine Siskin

MC: 40, Klehm F.P. (Winnebago Co.), 16 Jan. (ABr); 30, SRSF, 16 Jan.-28 Feb.+ (LA); 27, Spfld, 18 Jan. (DB); 4, Jaekson Co., 6 Jan. (TF); Knox Co., 1 Jan. (MD). Poor season in n.e. IL.

American Goldfinch

MC: 50, Knox Co., 2 Jan. (MD).

Evening Grosbeak

Palos (5), 16-19 Dec. (PD); Clin.L, 12 Dec. (RC).

Eurasian Tree Sparrow

MC: 25, Spfld, 18 Jan. (DB).

Exotics:

Ringed Turtle-Dove

MC: 26, Chi, 19 Dec. (fide AA).

Corrigenda:

The Northern Flieker photograph whieh appeared on the baek eover of *Meadowlark* Vol. 2, No. 1 was mislabeled. The eaption should read Northern Flieker (male) in alternate (breeding) plumage. Photographed April 1989 at IBSP.

Christmas Bird Counts: For The Birds?

Illinois birders share tales of cold weather counting

by Christine A. Verstraete

Some lucky "duck" might spot an American Wigeon in open water on this year's Christmas Bird Count. Photo by Ken Oberlander.

It was during the 1986 Christmas Bird Count that Wes Serafin, an avid fisherman, finally gave up his tackle and got hooked on bird watching after making the catch of the day.

Serafin of Orland Park remembers that cold day when he was unable to confirm the presence of a Snowy Owl rumored to be somewhere near the Indiana Dunes. "I looked and looked, but couldn't find it anywhere," he recalled.

At the end of the day something drove him to check one more time near an expressway interchange. As he approached the area he saw a birder with a tripod and huge lens. There atop a sign that said "WRONG WAY" sat the Snowy Owl. Serafin was so close to the bird that he could see its yellow eyes. "For 15 minutes it never flew," he recalled. "At the time I didn't realize what an unusual bird it was. It was an incredible first time lucky situation." If you have ever been on a Christmas Bird Count, you may know the thrill of finding rare birds such as the Snowy Owl. You may also know the agony of ending the day with nothing extraordinary to report. Then conversation turns more to the wind, the cold, getting lost, and the hours spent without sighting new birds.

Renee Baade, a Woodstock resident, has had her share of many a rare one on a Christmas Bird Count. But in some ways the most memorable count was in 1991 when she left her house then in Indiana at 4 a.m. to meet fellow birders some 100 miles away in Gurnee, IL. "It was cold. It was wet and it was overcast. It wasn't a nice day to be birding," recalled Baade.

It was, however, count day and, despite having trouble "even finding a sparrow," the group remained to the bitter end. Their total? Fewer than 30 species.

"It was uneventful," said Baade. "But I did meet some new people and that always helps ease the pain of not finding a rare bird." It also provides a motivating factor for going again the next year to try to make up for the previous dismal one.

That's partially what keeps Muriel Smith of West Chicago, a birder for 34 years, participating in Christmas counts. Besides, her house is in the count circle. That makes it convenient.

Smith keeps several feeders filled and scatters cracked corn on the ground in her backyard which borders a forest preserve and the west branch of the DuPage River. She and her group jaunted around in the neighborhood all day tallying birds during the 1991 count and had just about given up on finding something "exciting."

At the end of the day, the group began to make their list, keeping an eye on Smith's yard just in case. Then Smith saw something land in a tree. "I raised the binoculars and said, 'It's a shrike!' "

Smith got out her scope for a good look and, "By golly, it was a Northern Shrike sitting over at the feeder station!" It is that tantalizing possibility that keeps people coming out in the worst weather hoping to encounter the rare ones.

Get out your woollies and mittens, birders. The Christmas Bird Count is almost here.

Christine A. Verstraete is a writer living in Trevor, Wisconsin, just over the Illinois border.

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★ If you are able, submit a computer disc in ascii file or for Word Perfect 5.1. (No paragraph indents please.)

★ Include name, address, and day and night time phone numbers. Other pertinent information about your qualifications and background is also helpful.

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Third-year Bald Eagle. Drawing by Brian K. Willis.